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THE

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LITERATURE AND ART.

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## CONCERNING SOME LITERARY CLUB PORTRAITS.

### A NOTABLE GROUP.

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

THE enquiring stranger who may desire to know something of the Manchester Literary Club will learn, primarily, that it was born in an inn, and has since been content, as Mrs. Gamp would say, to "take the consequences of being found in such a situation." It has its present lodgment in a large city hotel, the latest of several similar hostelries, within which it has sojourned, for varying periods, during its forty years of pilgrimage. Its members foregather, for serious or lighter purposes, in a long, low room, sufficiently withdrawn and secluded, a kind of "sanctuary within a sanctuary," approached through various corridors. The available wall spaces of this room, as well as those of an ante-room, set apart for council purposes, are decorated with portraits and pictures, which have gradually accumulated during the period of the club's existence. These properties—which are regarded as precious in a sense which has nothing to do with any pecuniary standard of value—serve not only to lend the grace of an artistic environment, but constitute, as it were, the mural records of the club as distinguished from those other chronicles of a printed character, which may be found on the shelves of its library. If these pictorial marginalia, if one may so call them, could

be catalogued chronologically, and each one have attached to it the story of its genesis, the whole would form a very pretty bit of reading, not only historically interesting, but illustrative of the existence of sentiment, and the growth of good fellowship in the club. In pursuance of such a purpose the faithful recorder would, of course, begin with the earliest acquisition, which would be found in the shape of a somewhat faded photograph of modest dimensions, but of very peculiar interest. It ought to occupy a place on the line, and did so, as a matter of course, in its solitary days; but, with the introduction of fresh companionships, and perhaps, under some mistaken idea, that to "come up higher," is a mark of honourable distinction, in the invitation, which is applicable to pictures as well as to men, it has been "skied" on the wall of a recess near the fireplace, where it is elbowed, and partly obscured by a cabinet standing there. The consequence is that, to the casual observer, it may pass unnoticed, or have less attention bestowed on it than it really deserves. It contains a group of portraits, seventeen in number, and, if your sight is good enough, you may read on the margin of the picture that the persons there represented consist of "Sam Bamford and his friends of the Manchester Literary Club." It is not dated, but a reference to the club's Transactions shows that it came into existence somewhere about the session of 1867-68, and that the photographer was W. B. Bentley, at that time and afterwards, a member of the club. In the record of the session named, it is stated that the club acquired, by purchase, a copy of Bentley's photographic group of Sam Bamford and the Literary Club, and presented another copy of the same to Mr. Bamford. From another source one learns that the portraits were taken separately, that the grouping was the artistic work of Charles Hardwick, and that the temper of that worthy man was sorely tried

in the process. As it was at this time that the club migrated from its original home at the Cathedral Hotel to the Mitre Hotel on the opposite side of the Cathedral yard, it is probable that the picture was first hung on a wall of the room in the latter hostelry.

Sam Bamford and his friends are shown seated or standing about a long table, in an apartment, which in its furnishing, drapery and background is suggestive of a photographer's studio and accessories, and the various figures have all that peculiar look which is so often to be seen in victims who are facing a camera. Not a smile is there among them, and in the silence evidently prevailing, one is remotely reminded of a celebrated "party in a parlour." On the whole the effect is a dignified one, and in none of the sitters do you recognise that aspect of careless-ordered Bohemianism which, in literary connections, is usually associated with the inhabitants of the picturesque city of Prague. The incidentals of the picture, too, are in keeping with this impression. The table, or mahogany tree, as Thackeray would call it, is covered with a patterned cloth, and on it are placed papers and writing materials, pipes and tankards being nowhere in evidence ; indeed, in the absence of any sign to the contrary, it might be a meeting of savants brought together to discuss grave questions of philosophy or philanthropy. A further examination will show that Bamford and his friends signed the original copy, the signatures being reproduced here in facsimile, and arranged with a view to identification. These signatures have now a faded appearance, but you may see that they were, originally, all clear and legible, and, in many cases, characterised by much grace and beauty.

As befits the circumstances and occasion, the most dominant figure is that of old Sam Bamford, seen towering there, venerable and patriarchal in the midst of the group, a mas-

sive man in form and feature, with a strong, resolute, almost defiant face, half hid by a snow-white beard, and with long whitened locks straggling down from his brow, and resting on his stalwart shoulders. It is a characteristic figure, even to the tight buttoning of the frock coat across his broad chest. Probably at the time this portrait was taken Sam Bamford would be an octogenarian, and I am inclined to think that the taking of it was in some way connected with that event. To understand the situation thus created it would be necessary to give an impression of him such as would exist in the mind of any one of those friends gathered around him. They knew him as a poet, politician, and patriot, and his life story, as it had been told by himself, was familiar in a way not easily communicated to a later and less interested generation. He was by far the oldest man among them, having been born in 1788, a year which, now that we are in the twentieth century, seems a very long way off. They knew him, too, in more senses than one as a child of the Revolution, the embodiment of a strenuous spirit which had had its passage through times of storm and stress, but had now reached calmer conditions. On his political side he was known to them as the grand old Radical, the silk weaver of Middleton, who figured prominently at Peterloo, was often in prison and in bonds, who had risked liberty and life for causes which to him appeared just, who had been put upon his trial as a traitor, and, in after years, in the light of better knowledge, had been found worthy of an appointment in Somerset House. But it is not as a political Reformer that he is to be considered in the company in which we now find him. The friends about him knew him as a poet and prose writer of some distinction. His prose was autobiographical for the most part, and there was much that had a personal relation in his poetry, but within those limits he had delivered himself

with a power and individuality peculiarly his own. His "Passages in the Life of a Radical" is a book which stands by itself; there is nothing else quite like it. In it he tells of his political strivings and sufferings, but apart from this it is remarkable as a specimen of vigorous, truthful, plain-spoken English, and is alive—or as they say in Lancashire, "wick," in every word of it, full-charged as it is with "the thoughts that spring out of human suffering." His "Early Days," which tells the story of his life in the first five and twenty years of it, is equally characteristic in its outspoken ingenuousness, its northern strength of style, and the native blend of humour and pathos in the narrative. In his nature there was a decided poetical strain which reveals itself in his prose and is made distinctly manifest in the little volume of poems which he has given us. Like Lovelace, he could sing how

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.

Many of his songs of freedom were written in times of captivity, and under more benign conditions he could display a tender love for nature of which his lines "To a Snow-drop" may be taken as evidence—

Welcome, thou little modest flower!  
Thou ventur'est forth in stormy hour,  
Bending thine head beneath the shower,  
So meek and low;  
Smiling at hoary winter's lour,  
Amongst the snow.

\* \* \* \* \*

But, ah! too short will be thy stay,  
Lone guest of winter's dreary day!  
Scarce will the sun upon thee play  
His beam of light,  
Ere thou wilt wither and decay,  
And sink in night.

And so have many sunk beside;  
Some dropping from their tow'ring pride—  
Some in their lowness have died.

Perchance I may  
Look bright upon a stormy world  
And pass away!

Among the poets dearest to his heart was Tennyson, and in the life of the Laureate, written by his son, one of the most interesting passages is that which tells how Tennyson, having been made aware of Bamford's admiration of his poetry, sent his admirer a volume of his poems, and how he used to say of this warmly-expressed admiration and of the letter in which it was conveyed, that he regarded it as the highest honour which up to that time had been accorded him.

Four years after this portrait of him was taken, Sam Bamford passed away, and on an April day in 1872, one stood among a vast crowd of mourners, and along with many members of the Literary Club, and saw him laid to rest in the churchyard on the windy height at Middleton, and it is interesting to recall how the Rector, who committed his body to the grave, repeated some lines of the dead poet, which he said that Wordsworth himself might have written.

So much for the central figure of our group, of which the most important feature is that it contains the portraits of all the founders of the club. These were six in number, and of these the first to claim our attention is Joseph Chattwood, the club's first president. He is seen seated on the extreme left of the picture, a noticeable, capacious man, with

His double chin, his portly size.

Of him, as of a certain Highland chief, it could be said that wherever he sat there was the head of the table. Some of us used to see in him a resemblance outwardly to

Christopher North. He was a large-hatted, large-hearted man, of dignified presence, and of an eminently friendly disposition. He had been president ten years when I first became acquainted with him, and during the remaining two years of his presidency, I do not remember that he ever read a paper to the club. He gave one the impression of a man who could not strictly be called literary, but who was fond of the society of literary men, and to whom the atmosphere of such surroundings was very congenial. The bent of his mind, in its expression, seemed to be towards the exact sciences, and he had a special faculty for the adjustment of values, which brought him into large request in cases of arbitration. Perhaps it was as a result of this that he was in speech precise, and that his presidential pronouncements had a judicial tone which savoured not unpleasantly of the oracular. It is not to his disparagement that one records the further impression that more might be learnt from him regarding the material essence of a contract than the spiritual essence of a poem, and that a mathematical problem might be more to his taste than a Miltonic ode. Nevertheless, it must be said that the earlier records of the club show that he not infrequently contributed to its literary productions, the nature of which may be gathered from the following titles :—"The difference between Scott, Dickens, and Bulwer," "Did Shakespeare draw all his characters from the English?" "Which is the most respectable character in the Merchant of Venice?" "Man: His Future as an Animal," and finally, as illustrating his fondness for a speculative debate, this serious query long drawn out, "Granting a Future State—would humanity be benefited in this life by a clear realisation of the future one?"

In some worthy directions he played privately the part of Mæcenas to the club, and of his friendly hospitality I remember how at the end of a session he would invite the

club to meet him in the country and have tea with him, and how on one occasion a number of us did so at Disley. Lyme Hall was included in the programme, but thither the president did not accompany his guests, the reason given, seriously or otherwise, being his dislike for the mastiffs at the hall, and for dogs generally. Good old Chattwood! One has none but pleasant memories of him, and, looking back upon them he seems indeed to be "a part of those old days to me."

Close by Chattwood sits Charles Hardwick, with his elbow on the table, and his head resting on his hands, as in deep meditation, dear and ancient Charles, as he has affectionately been termed; antiquarian, historian, archæologist, artist, and art critic—oddfellow and good fellow both, with a mind crammed with knowledge, ancient and modern, of conversational powers illimitable, and free-flowing, of whom it has been said, as of Praed's "Vicar," that

His talk was like a stream which runs  
With rapid change from rocks to roses;  
It slipped from polities to puns,  
It passed from Mahomet to Moses,  
Beginning with the laws which keep  
The planets in their radiant courses,  
And ending with some precept deep  
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

In his own particular way he may be said to have rivalled Coleridge, and of him as of that great talker, there was at least one humorous, if doubtful, story told by Edwin Waugh, to the effect that on one occasion, when he and Charles occupied the same bedroom, he went to sleep while Hardwick was in full stream of talk, and awoke the next morning to find him still talking, the monologue having flowed on unweariedly all through the night. The keynote of Charles's disposition was one of absolute honesty, blended with a rare, and almost child-like ingenuousness. He never talked

for display, but always with the single-minded desire to impart knowledge. As an art critic he was deeply and scrupulously conscientious, and he used to say that before he entered upon his work it was almost a matter of prayer with him that he might not be led into the temptation to do anything unworthy of his office. His authorship was as wide and varied as his knowledge. He wrote of "Ancient British and Roman Remains," of "Lancashire Battlefields," of "Geology in its relation to Archaeology," and of local "Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk Lore." He not only wrote a History of Preston, but one relating to Friendly Societies, regarding which he was an acknowledged and much-consulted authority. He edited *Country Words*, a journal which had its genesis in the club, and *The Odd-fellows' Quarterly Magazine*. In another entirely literary connection of a personal kind, we knew him as the intimate friend, and warm admirer, of Eliza Cook, whose Christmas verses he never failed to recite at our Christmas Supper. It is a satisfaction to know that, in addition to this fading photograph, a more permanent reproduction of his rugged, honest features exists in the form of a bust which is also counted among the treasures of the club.

Near by him in our picture sits John Page, otherwise known as "Felix Fclio," and appropriately shown there balancing a folio volume on his knee, a stoutly-built Surrey man, but deeply sympathetic with Lancashire folk and folk-speech, known outside the club as a ruler and director of Corporation market places, a keenly-observant student of human nature on its grotesque side, in evidence of which you may read his book on "Hawkers, Street Dealers, and Quacks," the harvested gleanings of his accustomed streets and market places; a bird fancier withal—"the bird master," we used to call him—with a real love in him for the feathered tribe and the choirs where birds do sweetly sing.

He was a jocose man, with vast resources in the way of humorous stories, which he told in a manner peculiarly his own. He never wore a wreath of roses, but, year by year, at our annual festival he appeared before us crowned with holly in his favourite character of Father Christmas. He now looks down on us from a framed canvas which at the proper season is itself wreathed with holly, and about his memory there is a fragrance like that of rosemary.

At the other end of the table sit three others of the founders, all poets and prose writers, chief among whom is Edwin Waugh, looking comparatively young, with locks as yet unstreaked with grey, but already familiarly known to the folk of his native county by his "Sketches of Lancashire Life and Localities," his "Poems and Lancashire Songs," dedicated, by the way, to John Bright; his "Rambles in the Lake Country"; his "Barrel Organ"; his "Besom Ben," and many other products of his humorous brain. Already he had written "Come whoam to thy childer an' me," "What ails thee, my son Robin?" "God bless these poor folk," "Jamie's Frolic," and the sweetest of all his love songs, "When drowsy daylight's drooping e'e." Waugh's attitude among the group is characteristically unassuming, but the note-book in his hand is equally characteristic to those who remember the use he made of it as a humorous Autolycus.

Waugh's influence in the club was great, if not preponderating; though, like other creative spirits there, he was not given to writing papers for it. His presence was itself an influence, and he seemed to bring with him the breezy and invigorating freshness of the moorlands. His jests, his songs, and stories are among the pleasantest memories of a time when the dialect of the county entered more largely into conversation and literary expression than it does now. On occasion he would bring one of his own

poems, and that must have been a memorable night when he read his "Willy's Grave," with its tearfully-pathetic story of the "two little empty shoon." In his originality and power, both as prose writer and poet, he was unquestionably the most distinctive figure in the group.

To say this is not to disparage in any way his fellow writer in the same field, Ben Brierley, who is seen leaning upon the table, his chin resting on his hand, with a mildly-contemplative expression on his clean-shaven, Lancashire face, on which time had not yet ploughed those furrows suggestive of rugged strength, with which one was familiar in the later "Ab-o'-th'-Yate" days. He, too, had taken captive the dim common populations of his native county from which he sprang, and to the club he brought with him his own peculiar and attractive individuality, his own humour, his own mastery of dialect, in speech, and prose, and verse. Already he had given to his numerous company of readers "Daisy Nook Sketches," "Traddlepin Fold," "Chronicles of Waverlow," and "The Marlocks of Merriton." The recorded contributions to the club's proceedings by him up to this date include dramatised versions of his "Red Windows Hall," "Matching for Money," and "The Layrock of Langleyside." Much might be told of him did space permit, but one thing must at least be said, and that is that he is the only man in the club who has yet achieved the honour and distinction of a statue to his memory, and no one has hinted that he does not deserve it.

The remaining founder of the club is recognised in Richard Rome Bealey, some time secretary to the club, who sits there in the background, with paper on knee and pencil in hand; a mercurial spirit familiar to business men in connection with the wares of Leicester and Nottingham; and otherwise as a poet and punster, the author of "After Business Jottings," "Field Flowers and City Chimes";

but who is, perhaps, best remembered by his dialect poem of "Eawr Bessie." He also brought his own poetical creations to the club, and a paper on "Spiritualism," which appears in an early record, may be taken as indicating the existence in him of a form of speculative enquiry with which his friends were very familiar.

Taking now, and, of necessity, a rapid survey of the remaining figures, the next to be noted is that of Charles Swain, author of "The Mind and other Poems," a voluminous and popular song writer, and contributor of elegant verses to the Annuals, whose poems were to be found in richly-bound covers on drawing-room tables, more widely known, perhaps, at this time, than any of his fellow members, an ideal poet in appearance, with his ardent face, fine-phrenzied eyes, and flowing locks, whose tall form, in its street garb, one vaguely associates with a cloak of the Tennyson pattern, and who seemed still to be in company with the muses as he sat in his business chair in that dusky engraving office of his in Cannon Street. He had fine susceptibilities and a delicate grace of expression. Southey, we are told, held him in high estimation, and said, "If ever man was born to be a poet Swain was; and if Manchester is not proud of him yet, the time will certainly come when it will be so." Of him our esteemed president, at this time, has said, "Swain's gold, for gold it is, has been beaten out a little too thin in his more pretentious poems, and his fame will rest rather upon the shorter and more occasional pieces. In some of these he has shown a fine lyrical faculty and sense of verbal music."

Next to Charles Swain, looking older than his years, with his snow-white beard, sits John Harland, with his placid face, truthfully suggestive of a wise and self-contained intelligence of a high order, a journalist of the best type, and, like Hardwick, deeply versed in antiquarian, historical,

and legendary matters pertaining to Lancashire; the author of many books and pamphlets relating thereto; known, too, as the editor of Roby's "Traditions of Lancashire," and the collector, compiler and editor of "Ballads and Songs of Lancashire." Not far from him, with half-averted face and unaffected manner, stands Thomas Turner Wilkinson, of Burnley, Harland's editorial colleague, notably in volumes relating to legends, traditions, and folklore. He wrote voluminously and with wide variety. His last published book was a revised edition of Harland's "Ballads and Songs of Lancashire," dedicated to the President and Members of the Manchester Literary Club. Though deeply interested in local literature, dialectal and other, the bent of his mind was towards pure mathematics, finding expression in treatises on such attractive topics as "Similar Conics," and "Isosceles Bisectors." Close by Wilkinson is Alexander Gordon Henderson, for many years the musical critic of the *Manchester Guardian*, translator from the French of Victor Cousin's "Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant," and author of a biographical and critical sketch of "Kant's Life and Writings." He, too, though musical and philosophical, had a mind of the calculative kind, and was the author of a treatise on "Book-keeping, with an essay on Decimal Fractions and Logarithms."

Seated in front of the table opposite Harland, and looking not unlike Lord John Russell, is Jesse Percy Stokes, a journalist whom one remembers as a gentle, mild-mannered man, of most amiable disposition, and known to us as the local correspondent of *The Times*. When he died in 1872 it was said of him that the club had lost "one of its oldest and most valued members, who retired from this world as quietly and modestly as he had lived in it." It was further said of him that "he was respected and beloved by every member of the club, as well as by all men

who had the pleasure of knowing him. His good deeds, almost as numerous as his days, were quietly and secretly done ; they were known only to a few, and are buried with him."

Behind Charles Swain, and bending over him is David Morris, one of the earliest members. Like Chattwood, he was known in business relations as a valuer, and he is said to have been also an attractive lecturer on the poets of Lancashire. Of the doings of the club in 1868-69 there is this memorandum : "No papers appear to have been read during this year, but there was a memorable excursion to Edenfield on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, when the members were entertained to dinner by Mr. David Morris." The remaining sentence of the record tells how "a copy of the club group (evidently the one under notice) was presented to the Junior Garrick Club in London."

There are three personages represented here, of whom, in the absence of fuller historical information, one has little or nothing to say. William Richardson, of Southowram, Halifax, the grey-haired, benevolent-looking gentleman who sits in front of Wilkinson, one used to hear spoken of with most friendly regard. He appears to have had a taste for scientific study, and is said to have been an acceptable lecturer on electricity, magnetism, and galvanism. A more pronounced scientist was F. Trachsel, who has left traces of his club lucubrations in such titles—to the number of three in one session—as "Gunpowder the Civilizer," "The Origin of Carbon," "Flying Machines," "On Frogs and Toads said to have been found in stone and coal," and the briefer, but illimitably comprehensive one of "Creation." The existence in its records of these and other subjects, goes to show that, in its earlier stages, the club was not only literary, but scientific, antiquarian, and philosophical. Samuel

Smith, of Bradford, who stands behind Trachsel's chair, was, I am inclined to think, an esteemed, but not an active member. The only reference I find to him is in connection with his death, which is chronicled with much regret, along with that of John Harland, and not long after the production of this picture.

And now there remains but one. "the sole survivor he, of all this glorious company," and that is Charles Potter, the painter, the oldest member of the club. He is shown bending forward, with folded arms, and in an affectionate attitude, over the back of the chair in which sits Ben Brierley, his inseparable friend, to whom, in the "Daisy Nook" days, he not only played the part of sympathetic artist, but also that of discoverer. He then represented, and happily still represents, that blessed communion which has always existed in the club between artists and men of letters. There were other conditions, too, which rendered his presence here peculiarly appropriate. Like Bamford, Brierley, and Waugh, he is a true son of the soil, displaying in work and speech not only a native Doric strength, but also a flute-like Doric sweetness; and, like Bamford and Brierley, he was originally a weaver. The artist instinct in him germinated, and had its early growth, under hard conditions. An Oldham lad, and the son of a soldier, an old Peninsular veteran, who had fought on many fields, he was, at the age of fourteen put to work in a cotton mill. It is told of him how, as a lad, his love for pictures was so strong that, on Saturday afternoons, he used to walk to Manchester to feast his eyes on the contents of print shop windows; how later, when an art exhibition was being held in Oldham, he exercised his prentice hand in copying the best of the pictures, and how it was the discovery, by the owner of one of them, of a clever

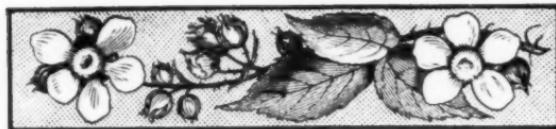
copy of it, exposed for sale, which led, not only to the detection of the copyist, but to the knowledge of his innocent intention, and so to his introduction to many helpful friends. It would take too long to tell how from cotton weaving in Oldham he passed to carpet weaving in London, continuing all the time an art student, and winning medals and a free studentship in a school at Westminster ; how, when the loom was abandoned, he became in turn a decorator, scene painter, and a teacher of drawing ; how he afterwards studied at the Louvre, and in the galleries of Italy, and eventually, after many wanderings, found his most congenial home in the Conway Valley, where he still abides. This is not the place for a critical estimate of his work, but those who are familiar with his Welsh landscapes, in their reflections of mountain gloom, of mountain glory, or of sweet pastoral solitudes, must have recognised, not only the merit and faithful honesty of the painter, but also the possession and expression of that subtly-interfused quality, which in written language, we call poetry. Though landscape painting has been his choice in art, he has produced at least one remarkable portrait, which passed into the graver's hands. Very fittingly the subject of it was Sam Bamford, and a framed copy of it is to be found among the club's mural adornments.

Charles Potter has not visited the club for some time, but was once reckoned among the cheeriest of its frequenters, a humorist, and one melodious of voice withal. He was never a literary contributor, and one can imagine him saying, "Let who will write the club papers if I may sing its songs." Those who have heard him render the lyrical sweetneses of Waugh and others, will have pleasant recollections of his deep, full-throated music. He is now completing his seventieth year, and physical weaknesses have befallen him, converting him, as he describes it, into

a "Limping Pilgrim," "as weak and wambly as a barrowful of warp-sizing." His friends grieve over this, but, along with him, are hopeful that some signs of returning strength may have fulfilment, and that he may again, with camp-stool and easel, be able to move about among his beloved hills and vales.

And now, in conclusion, let me say that when I have heard art-exponents of the lofty and idealistic order, speak in terms of unqualified contempt of photography in its relation to the finer arts, it has occurred to me that if any defence, or justification of the despised art were required, it would only be necessary to point to a picture like the one we have been considering, which was brought into existence by its beneficent, though mechanical, aid, and yet though comparatively valueless in art, is so rich in human interest and associations.





## SCANDINAVIAN STORIES ABOUT HULDRE.

BY ABEL HEYWOOD.

IT is perhaps expedient that I should in the first place explain, as briefly as may be, that Huldre are "half-human fairies," at least that is almost near enough for practical purposes.

There is little necessity for offering any apology for introducing such a subject to the reader's notice, for we are long past the time when Folk Stories such as the following were considered to be fit only for children. At the same time, I am not a deep student of folk lore, and in selecting these stories I have had no theories of my own to illustrate, no opinions to verify. But I am interested in fairies, and most of all in Huldre, because of the glorious land they are supposed to have inhabited, and the language they are supposed to have spoken.

The history of Huldre, seeing that they are unnatural beings, is not to be studied from nature. Even in Scandinavia, you would probably find some difficulty in learning exactly what a Hulder is, or has been supposed to be, and I shall refer you to the stories, in which alone we can learn anything about them, their appearance, attributes, manners or customs. I may, however, say that a Hulder is a supernatural being, and is distinct from the Nisse, on the one

hand, who is the mischievous imp who breaks pots in the night, milks the cows, upsets the milk bowls, and so on, whose counterpart we have in Robin Goodfellow; and on the other hand, from the gigantic ogres called Trolls, who live in vast caves inside the mountains, and who burst if they see the sun. Huldre, though they have some power of changing their shape and condition, are human in form, and are of ordinary human stature. But Trolls are often like human beings, and able to bear the light of the sun, they also have the power of changing their shape, so that the dividing line between Huldre and Trolls, if there be one, is often difficult to trace, as difficult, probably, as the division between some species of animals is found to be by naturalists.

The female Hulder is a much more attractive person than the male, but the difficulty in sorting her out from the Troll-wife is greater even than is the case with the males. I think we should call either the female Hulder or the Troll-woman a Witch; indeed, one of the Icelandic stories, provides her with a "witch's bridle," that she uses once a year, namely, at Christmas, putting it on some unlucky man whom she is thus enabled to ride to death.

Of the stories here dealt with it must be explained that some are Norwegian, some Icelandic. The former are given by Asbjörnsen, as from the relations of peasants, but the genius of the intermediary is undoubtedly transfused into them; the Icelandic stories are from a collection made in the same way as Asbjörnsen's, by Magnus Grimson and Jon Arnason, and translated into Danish by Carl Andersen. My translations are from the latter work, and the stories have, therefore, suffered translation twice. It is not to be wondered at, then, that they do not possess the grace of Asbjörnsen's relations; they are, however, direct, and to

the purpose, characteristics which are not always present in stories, even in our own language.

With respect to the translations themselves, I might quote Andersen, and to some extent appropriate what he says: "I have only to remark, that I have followed the original as nearly as possible, so as not to deprive the story of any of its primitiveness and freshness, and when I have, in rare cases, been obliged to deviate from the Icelandic text, it has only been to enable the reader, in my opinion, to obtain a truer and clearer impression of the intention of the original."

The difference between the Hulder of Asbjörnsen and that of the Icelandic stories, is considerable; as the Norwegian stories are lighter and more elegant than the Icelandic, so is the Hulder who is the subject of them, a more elegant and lovely creature. Indeed, as a whole, Icelandic stories are sombre in colour and sad in character. Supernatural as the characters are, the supernaturalism is often so dark and sorrowful as to fill one with gloom as one reads. No doubt the Icelandic climate is at the bottom of it. Life in Iceland is but a poor, weary business; the land is wild, rugged, savage; foliage is absent; summer is short, the winter long and weary. How can the people's stories be anything but sad?

In commencing histories and chronologies, it used to be the practice to begin at the beginning; that is, with the creation of the world, and I have seen that event stated with the greatest amount of particularity as the 21st March, and the hour six o'clock in the evening.

The collection of Icelandic stories that I have already mentioned, in the same way goes back to the beginning of things to account for the existence of Huldre, and I shall, therefore, give the story first, which commences the Icelandic series, together with a variant which is printed with it.

## HOW HULDRE-FOLK CAME.

Almighty God came one day to visit Adam and Eve. They behaved well to him, and showed him all the treasures of their house. They showed him, too, their children, whom he found hopeful and clever. He asked Eve if she had not more children than those she had shown him, and she answered him "No." But it is said that Eve had not finished washing some of them at the time, and she was ashamed to let God know it, so she hid them.

God knew it, however, and said, "What is hidden from me shall be hidden from mankind also."

The descendants of these children then, remained invisible to man, and lived in woods and heights, and mounds and rocks. From them descend the fairies, while mankind are descended from those children whom Eve showed to the Lord. Men can never see fairies unless the fairies wish it, but fairies can both see and allow themselves to be seen by men.

Another tradition relates that a man was once travelling. He was lost, and could not tell where he was. At last he came to a farm, that he did not know, and he knocked at the door. An elderly woman opened it, and asked him to enter, which he did, thanking her.

He found the house to be clean and well-arranged. The woman guided the stranger by the hand to a room where two young and beautiful girls sat, but he saw no one else in the house, neither women nor girls. The three received him kindly, gave him food and drink, and afterwards showed him to his bedchamber. Then he asked if he might sleep with one of the girls; the request was granted and the two went to bed. When the stranger turned towards the girl, he could find no body where she lay; he felt about with his hand, but the place was empty, although the girl lay quietly by him in bed, and he could see her the whole time. He asked her then how this came about, and she answered that he must not be surprised at it, for, said she, "I am a soul without a body." "When the devil formerly waged war against heaven, he and all those who were joined with him, where driven away into outer darkness. Those who take after him are also driven away from heaven, but those who were neither with nor for him, and did not attach themselves to either side, were driven down to the earth, and God condemned them to live in heights, mountains, and rocks, and they are called fairies or Huldre. They cannot live with other people, but only by themselves. They have power to do much, both good and evil. They have no bodies

like you men, but they can allow themselves to be seen by you, if they like. I am one of those fallen spirits, and it is therefore not possible for you to have more pleasure from me than you have already had."

The stranger had to be content with this explanation.

The following story is concerning a man who doubted the existence of Huldre:—

#### THE PRIEST'S DAUGHTER.

At Priest's Hill, in the province of Skaptafell, there once lived a priest, who was called Einar; he was a rich man, and had many children. He had a great dislike to stories about Huldre, and said that they had never existed. He had conjured them to come before him, but he plumed himself that he had still never come across them.

But one night he dreamt that a man came to his bed-side, and said, "Henceforth, you shall never be able to deny that Huldre exist, for I am going to carry off your eldest daughter, and you will never see her again. You have annoyed us Ellefolk long enough."

Next morning the priest's daughter, who at that time was twelve years old, was found to have disappeared. They sought her everywhere, but she was nowhere to be seen.

But afterwards, when her little brothers and sisters were running about and playing in the field, she came and played with them. They sadly wanted to take her home with them, but she always vanished. She told them that where she was, the people were very good to her, and that she had everything she wanted.

Her father often dreamt about her, and she told him what she had told the others, and added that the priest's son of the fairies (ellefolk) was about to marry her.

So things went on for some time until she once came to her father in a dream, and told him that now she wished very much to see him as a wedding-guest the next day, for she was going to be married.

From that time he never dreamt of her again.

The curious thing of this story is that the Huldre are shown to have priests of their own, and we shall find the same thing in other stories. Another Norwegian story tells us that the writing of a sacred name scared away a Hulder, but the Icelandic and Norwegian Huldre differ, as I have said, considerably.

## THE FAIRIES' NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Two brothers once disagreed as to whether Huldre existed. The one held that they did, but the other flatly denied it. This went on for a time, until the one who denied Huldrefolks' existence, became angry, and said that he would travel about, and not come home again until he had found for certain whether there were Huldrefolk, or whether there were not. Soon after he set off, and went over mountains and desolate stretches, and over hills and dales, but he became no wiser.

Nothing more is reported about his travels until one New Year's Eve he came to a farmhouse, where he found the people to be in great trouble. The traveller was a talkative fellow, and he asked what it was that so interfered with their enjoyment. The cause of it was, one of them told him, that no one would remain behind while the rest of the people went off to service in the church, because, on every New Year's night for a long time, the one who had been left behind to take charge of the house, had disappeared, and therefore no one would consent to remain. They expected that anyone who did it would meet his death. The stranger told them not to be afraid of such superstitious stuff, and offered to be left in charge himself. At this they all felt a stone to be removed from their hearts, but still they were afraid and pained to think of how it would end.

As soon as the farm people had gone, he set to work to loosen a board in the panel above the principal bed in the sleeping room, and crept in between the panel and the wall; he then pushed the boarding back again, leaving a little crack at the joining, through which he could see the whole of the room. His dog, which was with him, lay on the floor.

Soon after he had got this in order he heard the sound of men's voices, and footsteps outside, and shortly after, he heard a number of people come into the room. He saw that the dog was at once seized and flung down, so that every bone in its skin was broken; and next he heard the new comers talking with one another, and saying that there was a smell of men in the house; but someone suggested that that was not to be wondered at, seeing the people had only just gone out to attend service.

After these guests had looked around, the man who was sitting in concealment saw that they brought out a table, and spread a costly cloth upon it, and that everything they put on the table was in accord with it, the bowls and plates, drinking vessels and knives, being all of silver. Afterwards they sat down to the table, and every-

thing went on with great decorum. They set a boy to stand on the watch by the door, so that he might see when the day broke, and he kept running in and out. The man observed that every time the boy came in they asked him what time it was now; and he answered them that it was a long time from day yet.

Then the man began to tear down, little by little, the partition in the room, so that he could quickly come out between the panel and the wall, if it were necessary.

After a time, when the visitors had finished eating, he saw a man and a woman led in, and then a third person went towards them, who appeared to him to be a priest. Afterwards they began a song, and the usual bridal hymn was sung, and everything was conducted just as with good Christians. After the bridal ceremony was ended, they danced, and their rejoicings lasted for some time. After the dance, the Huldrafolks' door-keeper came in, and was again asked how much there was left of the night, and he answered that there was still a fourth part left. At this, the listener, who had wriggled himself out of the opening, and was standing behind the doorkeeper, suddenly called out, "You are a liar, daylight is high up in the sky." At this the Huldrafolk were so terrified that they instantly killed their door-keeper, whilst the man slipped in again between the panel and the wall.

When the Huldrafolk had killed their door-keeper, they rushed out as quickly as they could, like lambs out of a sheep pen, leaving all their things behind them, and when the man saw that, he followed them at a distance. The last he saw of them was that they cast themselves down into the sea that was in the neighbourhood of the farm. At this he turned home again, and gathered everything together, the remains of the food, and the costly ornaments.

Shortly afterwards the farm people came home from church, and glad they were to see the man again, who had stayed behind in charge of the farm, and they asked him if he had seen anything. He answered that it had not been much, and then told them all about it. They understood then, that the former watchers had allowed themselves to be seen, and had met their death like the dog.

The farm people thanked the man with many and fair words for his courage, and gave him everything that the Huldra had left behind them, and that he could carry away with him.

Then he went home and met his brother, told him all about what had happened to him, and said that henceforth he should never deny the existence of Huldra. Afterwards he succeeded to his parents'

farm, married, and had good luck in all his undertakings. He was esteemed as an upright man in his parish, was persevering, and knew how to take the best course under difficult circumstances. But it is told of the farm that he watched in, that night, that no people have disappeared any New Year's night since that time.

Huldre and Trolls alike appear to have great command of gold and silver. In this story we find a Huldre priest again and a Huldre religious ceremony. Why the fairies should come into a human habitation to perform their ceremonies we cannot quite see.

In the following, we have again a religious Hulder, who is positively married to a Christian :

#### THE HULDER-WOMAN.

There lived once in former days, somewhere by one of the west fjords, a young peasant and his wife, with their two daughters, who at the time of this story were about fourteen years old.

People knew about the wife, that she belonged to the Huldre, but she was, nevertheless, regarded as an ornament among women, on account of her modesty and friendliness in company. No poor person went unheard from her door; towards all she was kind and humble, and she sought the church often and earnestly, like the best of Christians. But on great festival days she would always leave the church during the long Mass, when the priest administered the Holy Sacrament, and raised the host to the congregation; for she said that her weak soul felt itself overwhelmed by the mysterious power that was present. She wept bitter tears at not being able to participate in the blessing with the Christian people.

Once there came two ill-looking and wicked young men to the village, who agreed together to obstruct her way as she came from the church. She tried to get by, but they thrust her back, and all her entreaties and her tears were of no avail. When she discovered what they were doing, she turned towards her husband and kissed him, while her tears rolled down, and on her little daughters' heads she laid her hands, as a sign of her motherly affection, and blessed them. Then she raised herself and fell down dead.

Her husband died of sorrow for her loss, but to the daughters their mother's last blessing brought good luck. They lived long and happily, and were in the evening of their lives surrounded by children and grandchildren, who remember with affection their beautiful and unfortunate mother, the Hulder woman.

Although the story does not say so, the two men were certainly Huldre, and the woman recognised it. The tale is curious, as showing how a Hulder can be a pious, good woman, but how there is a limit which Christians reach but she cannot. The next generation, from a mixed marriage, seem to suffer no disability of the kind.

#### THE CRADLE.

Once in the old days, when some people from Reykholar were on the mountains gathering moss, a girl was lost in a fog that overtook them, and the summer passed without her being found. A man then asked a Troll man to help him to trace her, so that he might get her back again, and the Troll did so. When they got her home again, her master, the priest, would never let her be alone. But once it happened that she was sent for out of church. When she had been gone a short time, her master, who suspected all sorts of things, went out to look after her, but she was gone. Then, looking about, he spied a man in a red jacket, who was riding off, with the girl behind him on the horse.

Some time now passed without anyone hearing anything of her, but once the priest's wife dreamt about the man who had stolen the girl. She thought that he came and brought a greeting from his wife, with the wish that the child, which would be found lying in a cradle before the church door, when she awoke, might be christened, and the priest was to have the gown which was lying over the cradle as his fee.

When the wife awoke, she found everything to be as the Hulder man had shown her in her dreams. The cradle was there, with the child in it, and over the cradle was a costly priest's gown and a linen shift. The priest christened the child, and laid it in the cradle again, wrapped up just as it had been when they found it. The priest kept the gown, but the shift they laid on the cradle again.

Shortly after the cradle and the child disappeared, but the linen shift was left behind.

#### TRUNT, TRUNT AND THE TROLLS IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Two men were once on the mountains gathering moss. One night, as both were lying in their tent, one asleep and the other awake, the latter saw his sleeping comrade stride out of the tent. He got up and made off after him, but could scarcely run fast enough to prevent the distance between them from increasing. Then the sleeper made towards the glaciers.

There the other one saw a great giantess sitting high up on a glacier point, and she alternately stretched out her arms and drew them back again towards her breast, and in this way charmed the man to her. He ran right into her arms, and then she went off with him.

The year after, people from his district were gathering moss on the same part of the mountain, when he came to them, but was so silent and reserved that they could hardly get a word out of him.

They asked him whom he believed in, and he answered that he believed in God.

This question, as is shown by what follows, was put to see if he was still a man, or had become a Troll; in the latter case he would no longer believe in God. This is curious, for the Huldre, as the other stories show, attend church, and are anxious to be christened, etc.

The next year he came again to the same people, who again were on the mountains, but he had then become so like a Troll, that they were quite afraid of him. Still, he was asked again in whom he believed, but he gave no answer, and this time he did not stay so long as before with the people.

The third year he came again to them, and he was now become a right down Troll, and had a horrible appearance. One of them still ventured to speak to him, and to ask him whom he believed in, but he answered that he believed in "Trunt, Trunt and the Trolls in the mountains"; then he disappeared. From that day he has been seen no more, but for many years afterwards, no one dared to go up to that place to gather moss.

The following two or three stories do not mention religious ceremonies, and are concerned with human beings as well as Huldre. The first two are from Asbjörnsen's Norwegian series.

#### THE HULDER AT ELDSTAD.

At Eldstad, in Ullensaker, there was once a wedding, but in the farm where the wedding was taking place, they had no baking-oven, and on that account they had to send the meat away to be cooked at a neighbouring farm, where there was an oven. In the evening, the boy from the wedding-farm had to go to fetch the meat home and as he was going over one of the moors there, he heard a voice calling out quite plainly

"You who are driving to Eldstad, let the woman called Deld know that Hild has fallen into the fire."

The boy drove on ahead till the wind whistled in his nostrils, for the weather was cold and bright enough for sleigh riding. The voice called the same thing after him many times, so that he remembered it well. He got home safely with his load, and went straight away to the supper table, where the servants, who were going backwards and forwards, were getting something to eat, just as they had time.

"Hollo, boy!" said one of the people of the house, "has the devil himself been driving you, or have you not yet been for the meat?"

"Oh, yes, I've been," said he, "you see, it's just coming in at the door; but I whipt the mare up and made her go all she could, for when I got to the moor a voice called after me:

"You who are driving to Elstad, let the woman called Deld know that Hild has fallen into the fire."

"Oh, that's my child," someone called out, and one of the women bolted off as if she were mad, cracking one after the other on the skull as she passed. But at last her hat fell off, and then they could see that it was a Hulder that had been there, and she had laden herself with meat and bacon, and butter and cakes, and ale and brandy, and everything that was good; but she was so upset about the child, that she forgot a silver cup that was in the ale bowl, nor did she notice that her hat had fallen off.

They took the cup and the hat, and kept them at Elstad; and the hat was such that whoever put it on became invisible except to those who were gifted. Whether it is there still I cannot say for certain, for I have not seen it, nor have I had it on either.

Mention is made here of the Hulder's hat falling off, and of the people there being able to see that she really was a Hulder; that would be because Hulder wear cow's tails at the back of their heads, instead of hair-plaits.

#### HULDER-STRUCK.

Uncle Mads lived at Knae in Hurdal. He was often out in the mountains cutting faggots and timber, and when he was out there he used to sleep there, too; he built himself a bear-hut, made a fire outside in front of it, and there he slept the night. Once when he was out in the wood in this way, with two others, just as he had cut down a large log, and was sitting resting a bit, he saw a ball of worsted come rolling over a big flat stone, right before his feet.

He thought it very strange, but dared not take it up; and it would have been well for him if he never had taken it up either. However, he looked up to see where it came from, and there on a rock sat a damsel sewing, and she was so beautiful and so fair that she shone again.

"Bring me my wool up here, will you?" she said. He did, and stood there ever so long, looking at the girl, and he would never have become tired of looking, so lovely did he think she was. At last he had to take his axe and get to his cutting again; and, after a time, when he glanced upward, she was gone. He pondered about her all day; thought it very strange, and wondered what would come of it. So in the evening, when his comrades were about to go to bed, he wanted to go with them. But no such thing, I can tell you, for she came for him, and he had to go with her, whether he would or not.

They passed into the mountain together, and he found everything very grand there, such finery there was as he had never seen before, and he was never able to tell how magnificent it was. There he remained with her three days and nights. Shortly after the third night he awoke, and there he lay amongst his comrades again. They believed he had gone home for more provisions, and indeed he told them that that was what he had done. But he was not altogether right afterwards, and when sitting with others he would suddenly give a jump and off with him; he was Hulder struck, that's what he was.

A good time afterwards, he was engaged in cutting wood for fencing up in the fields. Just as he had driven a wedge into a log, so that there was a long crack leading from it, a woman whom he took to be one from his home, came with dinner for him. There was cream porridge, and it was very rich, and was in a pail that was so bright that it shone like silver. She sat herself down on the log, and he laid aside his axe, and sat down on a stump close by, but just then he saw that a long cow's tail was hanging from her head, right down into the crack.

You may be sure that he didn't touch the food after that, but he sat there tugging and wriggling at the wedge, tell he got it out, when the log sprang together, and the tail was held fast in the crevice. Then he wrote the name Jesus on the pail. Of course, the Hulder took to her heels, but she sprang up so suddenly that the tail broke right off and remained in the log, while she hastened away, and he could not see what became of her.

The pail and the food were nothing more than a bark basket with some cow dung in it. From that time he dared scarcely ever go out into the wood, for he was afraid of her taking vengeance on him.

But four or five years afterwards a horse of his was lost, and he had to turn out himself to look for it. Just as he got into the wood he found himself in a hut with some people, but he had no idea how he came there. An ugly woman was at work on the floor, and away in the corner sat a child who was about four years old. The woman took a can of ale, went to the child with it, and said, "You go now and give your father a drink of ale." He was so terrified at this, that he took to his heels, and since that day he has neither seen nor heard anything of either her or the child; but he has been only half-witted ever since.

#### A "CHANGELING" EXPEDITION.

Kirstine, who lived on Lesser Thueraa, related that she had once been out in the meadows with her mother, who was a clairvoyant, when she saw two women come down from the mountain leading a man who was between them, and was carrying something. When they came nearer she saw that it was a cradle, over which something red was spread. Afterwards they took the man and beat him, until he little by little diminished in size until he became a little imp. Then they set to work to prod him until he was no bigger than a baby, when they laid him in the cradle, spread the red cover over it, and carried him between them towards the farm.

The girl then told her mother what she had seen, when the latter turned back and ran as quickly as she could, so as to get to her cradle, which she had left standing outside the barn, before the Huldre folk should come up.

When the Huldre women saw this they took their child up out of the cradle again, gave it a beating with a birch-rod, and shoved and pushed it before them. Under this treatment the little imp became, in the turning of a hand, bigger and bigger, until he became what he had originally been. So he went off with them into the mountain, where all three of them disappeared.

#### THE CHANGELING AT SOGN.

The farm Sogn, in Kjos, was once inhabited by two farmers. One of them, Halvggaard, had a son, whom people thought to be not altogether right, for he would learn neither to read nor to write, and would take to nothing, but lay all his time in bed, eating, folk thought, enough for two. Even the man himself thought that the boy

was a changeling, and it wasn't long before they were all quite certain about it.

When he arrived at the usual age for Confirmation, it happened once in the winter, that all the people, with the exception of the boy himself, were out of the place at their work; he was lying in bed, as usual, but in the same room one of the farm women was in child-bed, and her child lay with her. As the people went out, the woman heard that the boy had a tremendous fit of gaping, and she began to feel very queer about it, and was quite frightened by the dismal noise he made. Then she heard him begin to roll about and stretch himself in his bed. Afterwards she saw him get up in bed and stretch himself to such an extent that he reached the roof of the room. This room was built with an inside balcony at one end, and high up in the rafters there were small cross beams.

The gaping now came on him afresh, when he lifted his head up towards one of the beams, and took it in the middle of his gape, so that the highest part of his mouth was on the top and the lowest was under the beam. Moreover, he was then so ugly and loathsome to see, that the woman became afraid of her life, and screamed heavens high with terror at seeing him and finding herself alone with him in the room. Indeed, she was frightened to be left alone for a long time after.

However, no sooner had the woman uttered her scream than he collapsed, as if shot by a cannon ball, down into his bed again, where he put himself to rights before the folk came in.

From that day no one had any doubt that the boy was a changeling.

#### ELLEKONEN.

In Hvamsbygd, in the district of Dale, stands a farm, which is called Asgaard. It is near the sea, under a pleasant hill, and along the shore there runs a smooth and beautiful stretch of grass, opposite which is a large moss that reaches right up to the buildings of Asgaard, and in the middle of it stands a high cliff that is called Asgaardsklint. Old folk tell that huldre lived in this cliff.

At Asgaard lived a young and hardy peasant, who had a young, clever, and pretty wife. One Christmas Eve she was alone in the pantry, engaged in cutting hung-meat into slices that was to be served out to the farm men, as it is commonly done still in the country at this time of the year. While she was busy with this, an unknown man came in, took her by the hand, led her out, and went with her down to Asgaardsklint. The cliff stood open, and they went in. There lay a woman in the heavy pains of labour. The man led her

to the bed, and said: "This is my wife who lies here in childbed; attend to her, and if you can, help her." The woman helped as she could, and shortly after the child was born, and when it was born she washed and swaddled it. The Hulder woman then gave her a black stone with which she asked her to streak the child's eyes. She did so, but at the same time rubbed one of her own eyes, without anyone perceiving it. Then she found a curious change to take place in herself, for with that eye she could see everything that is under or above the ground, and could see spirits as well as human beings. After that, the man took her by the hand, and led her back to the home field at Asgaard. Before they parted he thanked her with many fair words for her help, and asked if he might again have her assistance, should he need it, and then said that if she would get up early next morning she would find on the ground near the door, a small box, in which there would be a woman's dress, that should belong to her, and she must wear it on either Christmas or New Year's Day, whichever of the two divine services was held at Asgaard. After he had said this he left her.

The woman went home, taking no particular notice of what the man had said, but she was up in the morning before anyone else, and found a little box by the wall, in which there lay so pretty a gown that she had never seen the like of it before. Divine service was held that day in Asgaard, and all the folk stared to see the splendid gown she wore.

For ten years in succession after this occurrence she disappeared once a year, remaining away about one fourth part of the twenty-four hours, and sometimes even for twelve hours, and no one knew what had become of her. Her husband often begged her to tell him where she had been, but she was not to be persuaded; she told it to no one, she said.

It happened one night that one of the farm labourers could not sleep, and he heard someone come to the window above the married couple's bed, call the woman, and beg her to make haste and come, for his wife was in labour, and he had great fear for her this time. The woman got up at once, silently put on her clothes, and went out of the room.

The farmer missed her in the morning, and was greatly troubled and alarmed. The people of the house dressed themselves as quickly as possible, but when they got outside they met her coming down from the moor, and she was in great trouble. Then she told them all about it, from beginning to end, that she every year had been fetched to the woman in the cliff, but that she had now died in childbed.

Some years afterwards it happened that the woman was in Stykkesholm, in the Western land, where there was a large fair. There she saw, among others, the Hulder man from Asgaard's cliff, and, addressing him, she said, "Then you are here, are you?" Without answering, he came up to her, stuck his finger into the bewitched eye, by which she was able to see everything, and from that day she was blind of it, and she regretted ever afterwards her imprudence. Still, she lived a happy and fortunate woman for the rest of her days.

The inference from this is that the man was invisible to others in the fair, and that she, by addressing him, betrayed the fact that she saw with a Hulder's eye.

#### THE HULDER KING.

One summer, when people, as was customary, were engaged in the fishery at Selö in Reydartjord, it happened that as they were bringing away the dried fish, a large part of the priest's fish was still left in the fish house. The weather was in a bad quarter, so that they were not able to return for their fish, until good sailing weather should come again in the autumn. When this time came they set out to fetch it, and at once commenced carrying it from the hut to the boat. In talking they said it would be as well if one of them should go over to the other side of the island, and see if anything had been washed ashore, and one of the priest's servants said he was willing to go, while the others carried the fish down. He did so, and the others loaded the boat.

When the men had finished, they waited a time for their companion, but when he came, it was impossible to get him up into the boat, on account of the surf; so they called to him that he must stay where he was, and that they would fetch him the following day if the weather was fine enough. They thought that they had better preserve their own lives, so they steered for the land, leaving him helpless behind.

A sleet came on, but without wind, and seeing nothing else for it, the man went up to the fish-hut, and remained there till the evening. Then he began to despair, and thought that it would be better to make an end of himself than to starve to death, and he ran out of the hut. He now saw something like a beautiful star, but he thought it could not be a star of heaven, on a cloudy night like that, and when he came to see more clearly it appeared to him to most resemble a light in a window. He ran towards it, and presently

came to a house that was so fine that it was like a king's palace, and he heard someone say inside: "Yes, girls, the poor man who was left behind on the island to-day is come to the house; go out and fetch him, for I should not like him to die near our door." With this, a young girl came out, and asked him to take off his snowy clothes, and afterwards led him up a very high staircase to a beautiful room, ornamented with gold and precious stones. There he saw many women, and one was more beautiful than the rest. He greeted them modestly, and they returned his greeting. The beautiful maid rose and led him to a little, but handsome room, set wine and food before him, and then left. It is not told how he was shown to rest at night, but in the morning she came to him and said that she might not stay there for his entertainment, but she gave him everything that might tend to his comfort.

Thus passed the winter to Christmas, and on Christmas Eve the fair woman came to him and said that if he thought she had been of any service to him he must grant her a request, and not deny her, namely, that when next day a dance was being held, he must not be inquisitive and look out of the window, for he would find enough to amuse himself in his own room. He promised her what she required, and early on Christmas Morning she brought him wine and food, and anything that would help to amuse him, bade him farewell, and went her way.

But soon after he heard singing, and the music of a lyre. He wondered what could be the cause of such rejoicing, and thought that there would be no harm if he just took a peep; there was no need for anyone to see him. He scrambled up then to get to see the dancing, and when he had looked out, he saw a lot of people, some of whom were dancing, some were practising all sorts of music, and in the midst of the crowd he saw a kingly man sitting with a crown on his head, and with a woman on each side of him. He supposed that they must be the queen and their daughter; for he recognised the latter. He dared now no longer look out, and went away from the window, but the dancing lasted until the evening.

When afterwards the girl came into the room to him she was, contrary to her custom, distant with him, and said to him that he had ill kept his promise to her not to look out of the window, but she had been able to contrive that her father should not see him this time.

It was getting very near the New Year now, and nothing particular had happened, but on New Year's Eve she came to him and said that she next morning would be with her father to see the dancing, and

she hoped he would prove more faithful to her than he had been at Christmas, and not be inquisitive. He promised now by everything that was sacred, and that he would not peep this time, so she brought him food and wine and all sorts of things to pass away the time, and then went away. But when the morning came, he heard even more noise and rejoicing than at Christmas. So he said to himself that he must really not take a peep, for it was just the same sort of thing as at Christmas, and a good part of the day passed whilst he sat there quietly. But then he began to be tortured by curiosity to know something about the goings on, and so he pept, and saw that the dancing was much more diverting than the last time, for many splendid knights were dancing before the king and queen.

Then he hastily drew back, but saw, however, that someone turned an eye towards the window. When the evening came on, and the girl came up to him, she was very angry, and reproached him with having deceived her again. Still, this did not interfere with the friendship there was between them, for she was just as kind to him as before.

The winter passed away, and Easter was coming on. On Easter Saturday she came to him, talked to him kindly, and begged him not to pry the next day, if he again heard rejoicings going on. For if her father became aware that she had a man in the house, it would cost her her life.

On Easter morning she came to him, bringing him everything he could wish for, then bade him farewell and went away. The rejoicings began again, just as before. But as the day wore on, he began to be weary of his solitude, and went from his own room into the next one, thinking that she would never know, if he did just take a peep again. So, for a moment he pept out, and saw the same kind of thing going on as at New Year's time. Then he went back to his own room, and remained there till she came to him in the evening, when she was cross with him, and said he had deceived her again; she did not know if her father had noticed him, but he had been colder to her than he was accustomed to be, "and I did not expect," she said, "that you would be so false to me, but in time to come, you will of a certainty be so in more things than this."

The Spring was nearing now, and on the last evening of Winter she came to him and said that to-morrow was the first day of Summer, and that his own people would then come from the mainland to fetch him away, so that early in the morning he must go to the fishing hut; but one promise she asked of him, if he set any value on the fact that she had preserved his life through the winter, and that was, that he should acknowledge himself the father of the child she

was now carrying by him; her life depended on it, for if she could not name the child's father, her father would have her killed. Could she name the father, however, he would not kill her, and she begged nothing of him now, but that he should show himself true to her in this matter.

He promised: and said further, that never should it happen that he would deny the fatherhood of the child.

He now bade her farewell, and thanked her for all her kindness to him during the winter, and early next morning set off to the hut. After being a short time on the way, he looked back towards the hall, but he saw nothing but stony hills and rocks. Then he went away to the fish-hut.

The day was mild and the sea quiet, and soon he saw a boat coming from the land; but when the boatmen reached the island, and he went towards them, they were afraid, for he was plump and fat, and they thought it must be his ghost, for they felt sure that he must have died in the winter, and no one ventured to speak to him, much less to come to land for him. At last, however, the steersman landed, and asked him if he was a living man or a ghost, and if he was the same man they had left behind on the island in the autumn. He said he was the same, and the other said he could not understand how he had been able to exist so long without food. The islander answered that the sea-weed on Selö was not worse food than the water porridge at Holme. He would not tell them any more, but got into the boat to them, and they rowed him to Holme. Everybody wondered to see him come back alive, and they put many questions to him as to how he had lived through the winter, but no one got more out of him than had those who fetched him from the island.

Late in the summer there was a beautiful Sunday; there were many people at the church, and among them the island man, the priest's servant. But when the priest and the congregation entered the church, they saw a cradle by the altar, that no one knew anything about, and a chasuble stitched with gold was spread over the child, but there was no one with it; the people only saw that a fair woman's hand rested on the edge of the cradle. They all wondered, and looked at one another, but the priest arose and said that the child had been brought to be christened, which could not be unless someone in the church would stand sponsor, and above all he thought of his own servantman, and he believed that *he*, the year before, had left it behind at Selö; but the man denied that he knew anything about it. The priest then said that he should christen the child in the man's name, but the servant denied it again, and said he would

have nothing to do with it. The priest answered that he could not have lived on the island without man's help, but the servant said he never would acknowledge the child as his own, and he forbade the priest to christen it with his name.

Then the cradle was pulled away, and it disappeared, and at the same time the people heard loud weeping, which died away outside the church. The priest and the others followed the sound, and they heard crying and sobbing, till it reached the sea. The chasuble was left in the churchyard, and was used at Holme long after that time.

Everyone wondered over the occurrence, but it made the deepest impression on the priest. The servant man gave himself up to melancholy. The priest asked him what was the truth, and he told him all about it; that he in the winter had lived with a king and his daughter, and that he repented every day that he had denied the child.

The servant was never a man again from that day, and with this ends the story of the Hulder King of Selö.

#### THE SÆTER GIRL.

There lived once in the North Land a priest, who had adopted and brought up a girl from childhood. The priest's sæter lay high up in the mountains, and it was usual to have the sheep and cattle there in the summer, under the care of a sæter-girl and a shepherd. When his foster daughter was old enough she learnt how to manage things at the sæter, and she did well, as indeed she did all kinds of work. She was a clever girl, fair to see, and smart in many things. There was not her match in that part of the country, so her hand was sought by many rich men, but she gave the basket to the whole of them.

The priest once talked with the girl, and advised her to marry, for, said he, he was now an old man, and he could not therefore always be a support to her. But she wouldn't hear of it; her mind was far from such a thing; she was quite contented as she was, and it was not everyone who found luck in matrimony. So the subject was dropped for the time.

As the winter came on, folk thought that the girl began to increase, and the longer the time went towards spring the bigger she became. In the spring her foster-father talked with her again, and asked her to tell him openly the true state of affairs; she was certainly with child, he thought, and it would be best that she should not go to the sæters this summer. But she denied that she was with child; she ailed nothing, she said, and could manage the sæter this summer just as well as she had done it before.

The priest saw that he could make nothing of her, so he let her have her own way, but he charged the men who accompanied her to the sæter, never to let her be alone, and they promised him full and fast.

Up at the sæter the girl was lively and happy, and some time went without anything happening. The people gave her careful attention, and never let her be alone. But it happened one evening that the shepherd lost all the sheep and cattle, and everyone who could use his legs were obliged to leave the sæter. The girl alone remained behind. The men were a long time engaged in their search, for a thick fog came on, and it was towards morning before they found the cattle. When they came home again the girl was up, and was, as usual, quick and light on her feet, and they saw, too, after a time, that she was not so large as she had been, and they no longer thought that her stoutness had been that of a woman with child.

In the autumn they moved home from the sæter, both the people and the animals, and the priest now saw that the girl was smaller in the body than she had been. He called in the rest of the sæter folk, and asked if they had observed his orders, and never quitted the girl. So they told him what had happened, and that only on one single occasion had they left her, when they had to seek for the cattle that had strayed. The priest was very angry, because they had acted contrary to his orders, but he expected as much, he said, when the girl went off to the sæter in the spring.

Next winter a man came to woo the foster-daughter; she would not hear him, but the priest said that she ought not to refuse to marry; people were unanimous in praising the suitor, and he was of good family. He had last spring taken a farm under his father, and his mother was very fond of him. So this wooer didn't get a basket, whether it was with or against the girl's will, and the wedding was arranged for the spring by the priest. But before the bride wore her wedding dress, she said to the bridegroom, "I must have this promise from you, since you marry me against my will, that you will never entertain any guest in the winter, without first letting me see him; otherwise it will go badly with you." The man gave her his promise.

So the marriage was celebrated, she went home with her husband, and took over the household management, but without any pleasure, for she was never happy, and her face was always dark, although the man spared her in every way, and could scarcely find in his heart to let her put her hands in cold water. Every summer she sat

inside the house, while the others were busy outside with the hay. Then her mother-in-law would come to keep her company, and to help her with the cooking. Occasionally they sat knitting and spinning, and the old woman told stories to amuse the girl.

Once when she had finished a story, the old woman said to her daughter-in-law, that now *she* must tell something. To which the latter answered that she knew no tales, but when the old woman continued to press her, she promised at last to tell the only story she knew, and began as follows :

"At a farm there once lived a sæter girl. Not far from the sæter rose some great rocks, that she often passed near. In these rocks there lived a young and good-looking Hulderman, whom she soon came to know, and an affection grew up between them. He was so good and kind to the girl that he never denied her anything, and he acceded to her wish in everything. The end of it was, that after some time the sæter-girl was with child. When she had to go to the sæter the next summer, her master begged of her to let him know if she was in the family way, but she denied that she was, and went off to the sæter as usual. The master, however, charged those who went with her to the sæter to never let her be left alone, and they promised him. But they left her, notwithstanding, to look after the cattle, and then she felt labour-pains. Her sweetheart then came to her, sat with her, helped her with the birth, and afterwards washed and sponged the child. But before he went away with the boy he gave her a drink from a glass, and it was the sweetest drink I ever"—here she dropped the needles she was knitting with; she stooped to pick them up, and, recovering herself, continued—"she ever had tasted, I ought to say, and at the same time she became well, and a virgin again. From that time the Hulder-man and the girl saw one another no more; and against her will, she became the wife of another man. Her mind dwelt always with her first love, and from that time she never knew a happy day. And that's the end of the tale." Her mother-in-law thanked her for the story, and bore it in mind.

And so, some time passed again without anything happening. The woman went about as usual, bearing her own sorrow, but she was always good and kind to her husband.

One summer, when all the people were engaged in the hay harvest, two men, a full-grown one and a smaller, came into the field to the farmer. They had both broad, slouched hats on their heads, so that their faces could only be seen indistinctly. The taller of the two asked the farmer if they could have shelter during the winter with

him. The peasant answered that he did not take anyone without his wife knowing of it, and he said he must talk the matter over with her first; but the man asked him not to talk in such an unbecoming manner, that it was cowardly for a man to be thus under his wife's slipper, and he ought to be able to please himself about such a simple thing as giving two men food through the winter. The end of it was that the farmer promised them winter quarters, without first asking his wife.

In the evening the strangers came to the farmer's, and he let them go to the cottage in front of the farm, and told them they might stop there. Afterwards he went to his wife and told her all about the matter. She became very uncomfortable, and said he had neglected her first and in all probability her last request. But he had been the only one to receive them, and it must remain his affair alone, whatever might come of their being there in the winter. After that they said no more about it.

All was quiet now until the autumn marriages. It was at that time the custom, as it still is in some parts of Iceland, that those who wish to go to Communion, go round to all the people of the farm, kiss them, and beg to be forgiven for anything they may have done amiss towards them. The mistress had until this day avoided the winter guests, and had never allowed herself to be seen by them; nor did she on this occasion go to them to say farewell.

The wedding folk went off. But when they were come outside the fence of the home field, the farmer asked his wife, "have you said farewell to our winter guests?" She answered, "No." He asked her not to treat them so badly as to go away without first saying farewell. "In most things," she replied, "you show that you regard me little—firstly, you took in these men without speaking to me about it, and now you will force me to kiss them. Nevertheless, I shall obey you, but you must take the consequences; for it will cost me my life, and in all probability will cost you your's also."

She turned now towards home, and after waiting until she had gone in, the farmer turned, and went in too, to find his winter guests. He found them in their room.

There he saw that the tallest man lay on the floor with the wife in his arms, and that the hearts of both were broken from grief. The other man stood weeping over them, but he vanished on the farmer coming in, and no one ever knew where he went.

Everyone remembered now what the mistress had told her mother-in-law, and knew that the first of the strangers had been the Hulder-man, and that the other, who disappeared, was their son.

## A HULDER STORY.

Many years since there lived a well-to-do old couple at a farm up in Halland. They had a son who was a dragoon, and a big, fine young fellow he was. They had a *sæter* up in the mountain, and it was not like *sæters* usually are, but a neat, well-built place, and there was both a stone chimney and a ceiling, and there were windows, too. They lived there the whole summer, but after they had gone home again in the autumn, wood-cutters, sportsmen, fishermen, and such people as are accustomed to be in the woods at that time, observed that some Huldre people had taken possession of the house, and had their sheep and cattle with them. And among them was a girl, who was so beautiful that they had never seen the like of her.

The son had often heard them speak about her, and one autumn when his people had returned home from the *sæter*, he put on his full uniform, put his military saddle on his horse, with both holsters and pistols, and rode up the mountain. When he got to the edge of the meadow he saw such a glare of light in the *sæter* that it shone through all the chinks between the logs, so then he knew that the Huldre-folk must all be there. So he fastened up his horse with a switch, took one of the pistols out of the holster, crept softly up to the window and pept in. He saw there an old man and a woman, who were so crooked, so wrinkled with age, and so horribly ugly, that he had never seen anything like it in his life. But the girl was there, too, and she was so lovely that he thought he could not live if he did not possess her. All the people had cow's tails, the beautiful girl, too. He could see that they had only recently come, for they were only just getting things in order. The girl was washing the ugly old fellow, and the woman was making a fire on the stithy, under the big kettle.

All at once the dragoon pushed open the door, and shot his pistol off right over the head of the girl, so that she rolled over on the floor, and at once she became just as ugly as before she had been beautiful, and she had a nose as long as the holster.

"Now you can take her; she is yours, now," said the old man. But the dragoon was like one spell-bound, he stood and stood, and could not move a peg either forward or backward. The old man then began to wash the girl, and she became less ugly, the length of her nose diminished by one half, and the horrid cow's tail rolled itself up, but pretty she was not, it would be a sin to say she was.

"She's yours, my bold dragoon now, so put her on your saddle, and ride to town with her, and get married to her. You can find

us a little room in the washhouse, for we will not be with the other wedding-guests," said the ugly old fellow, who was her father; "but when the toast of the bride comes on, then come and look for us."

He dared not do otherwise; he took the girl up with him on the saddle, and prepared for the wedding. But before they went to church, the bride begged one of the bridesmaids to stand right behind her, so that no one should see the cow's tail fall off when the priest should lay his hands on her.

So they held the wedding feast, and when the toast of the bride came on, the young man went out to the room that had been prepared for the old Huldre-folk. He found no one there, but when the wedding-guests were gone, he found so much gold and silver and money that he had never seen such riches before.

All went well now for a long time, and every time they invited friends the woman laid places for the old people in the outside room, and every time they left after them so much money that at last they hardly knew what to do with it. Still, the wife was as ugly as ever, and he was tired of her, and it was plain enough that he behaved badly to her; indeed, he even went as far as to beat her.

One day he had to go to the town; it was in autumn, and there was a hard frost, so that he had to shoe his horse before setting out. He went to the smithy, for he was a clever smith; but, however he tried, the shoes were always too large or too small, and would never fit. He had no more horses at home, and time went on, so that noon and afternoon came, and there he was still.

"Will you never have the shoes done?" said the woman; "you are no clever man, much less a clever smith. It seems there is nothing else for it, so I must go into the smithy myself; if the shoes are too big cannot you make them smaller, and if too small cannot you make them bigger?"

She went into the smithy, and the first thing she did was to take a shoe with both hands and straighten it out.

"Look," she said, "you must do it in that way." Then she bent it together, as if it had been lead. "Now hold the foot up," she said, and the shoe fitted exactly, so that the best smith could not have done it better.

"You are mighty strong in the fingers, you are," said the man, looking at her.

"Do you think so?" said she. "And how do you think things would have gone with me, if you had been as strong in your fingers? But I have loved you too much to lift my hands upon you."

From that day he was a changed man towards her.

This story, though it is the last I propose to tell, does not by any means exhaust the subject, even as presented in the two books I have named. What strikes one most in the greater part of the stories, the Icelandic ones, is that they are related as though they were absolute fact, and I think it is evident that they must have been received as varacious history by both relater and hearer. The narrative is sober prose, from beginning to end ; men who have doubted the existence of Huldre, have been convinced of their error, which they have suffered for ; the lives of both men and women have been affected by Huldre, in ways that there was no doubting or gainsaying.

It is not so with the Norwegian stories ; one might suppose them to have been related by a winter fireside by a woman (it was often a woman), whose tongue was in her cheek, a sly expression being popped in occasionally, not only to give piquancy to the relation, but to show that the story teller did not believe more than half of what he or she was telling. But it is not difficult to understand this difference, and I hinted it in my opening remarks. Icelanders were out there, in their far-away island, cut off from the rest of the world by what Lord Beaconsfield called "the melancholy ocean," in the presence of the most terrible phenomena of Nature, the volcano, the glacier, the iceberg, the boiling geyser, in the midst of the desolate waste of snow and ice ; savage rocks, hurled and twisted, and crevassed and torn by the powers of the earthquake ; a long winter period of almost continual darkness. What could they do, having brought their Gods, their Trolls, and their Huldre from the Norway they had abandoned, but believe themselves to be the sport of supernatural monsters, and of all sorts of mysterious and occult powers ? We have to remember, too, that Christianity did not reach Iceland until long after it was established in the continent of

Europe, and that there was, after the Viking period at any rate, very little intercourse between the island and the rest of the world. From these causes not only was the language preserved pure, but also the old traditions and beliefs.

Norway, on the contrary, felt the influence of the civilization of the rest of Europe, greatly modifying her language, and losing the old customs and superstitions to a great extent.

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### SONNET.

#### ON BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH SYMPHONY.

BY WILLIAM BAGSHAW.

Titans are groaning in the depths profound,  
Earth's long imprisoned secrets burst their chains  
And scale the heavens with giddy, madd'ning strains  
That fling defiance to the farthest bound.  
Anon they sink as though the Deity frowned ;  
We hear mysterious noises in the gloom  
Like muttered threats of some impending doom  
And Ocean's mournful brooding o'er the drowned.  
Once more chaotic forces dare to rise  
And strike their thundering blows against the skies ;  
But powers benign are mustering from afar  
Celestial strains are quelling all the jar—  
In vain, in vain chaotic might is hurled,  
Love, Truth and Beauty harmonise the world.



## THE VERSIFICATION OF SPENSER'S EPITHALAMION AND PROTHALAMION.

BY GEORGE MILNER.

SPENSER, like most of those whose rightful place in the hierarchy of poets is unchallenged, is talked about and not read. His greatness is accepted but is not verified. This is the fate of those whom we call the "Classics." The sooner we change our practice the better. Some reputations may suffer, but those who are truly great will hold their own. With Spenser, as with the rest, the nearness which comes of careful and reverent study will increase rather than diminish the enchantment. One other reason in favour of more systematic attention to those who are acknowledged to be great is, that by no other means can we escape from the intolerable critical babel and confusion of the present day, and arrive at a just and reasoned estimate of our contemporaries. In his own age Spenser was regarded as the prince of living poets, and if we make one obvious exception he still maintains that place among the Elizabethans, of whom in point of time he was the first. In 1593 Shakespeare gave us his "Venus and Adonis." All his greatest work had to follow. Two years later Spenser published the "Epithalamion," and his career was closing, but he more than any other had lighted the torch which was

to burn through "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." We have only to look at those who immediately preceded him—Wyatt, Surrey, Sackville—to see that he owed little to them. Their heavy and uncouth prosody seems removed by centuries from his melodious verse. For his real master he went back, through a comparatively barren period of two hundred years, to Chaucer, and from him, as he tells us himself, his song-craft was chiefly learned. It has often been said of Spenser (as it may be said also of Keats) that he is the poet's poet. Hazlitt puts it in another way—"Of all the poets, he is the most poetical"; and this quality, this rare essence and sublimation of poetry is nowhere seen more clearly than in the two poems with whose versification we have now to deal. They are among what are called the minor poems, but a knowledge of them is essential to an understanding of Spenser's genius, indeed, the same is true with regard to any of our great poets. To prove this it is only necessary to mention Shakespeare and Milton. We have not got all of Shakespeare when we have read his Plays; nor can we rightly apprehend Milton when we have mastered his "Paradise Lost."

The Epithalamion appeared in 1595. Many of the details in Spenser's life are obscure, but it seems pretty certain that after an unrequited passion for a lady in the North of England, who is known in his poems as Rosalind, he became attached, in 1592, to a certain Elizabeth—three Elizabeths, he said, had influenced his life, his mother, his wife, and his Queen—to whom he was married on the 11th of June (St. Barnabas' Day), 1594. The story of his love is given in the "Amoretti," a series of fifty-eight sonnets, and is also touched in a passage which occurs in the 10th canto of the 6th Book of the "Faery Queene." The Epithalamion is at once the most exquisitely finished of all Spenser's poems, and the noblest spousal verse to be

found in English or in any other language. It consists of twenty-three long stanzas, which combine in the most skilful manner definite form with liberty of variation. The normal type is a verse of eighteen lines, but more frequently it runs to nineteen, and once it falls to seventeen. It begins invariably with a quatrain of alternate rhymes followed by a couplet. The normal line is of ten syllables, but short lines—usually the sixth, eleventh and sixteenth—are introduced, and a couplet, the second line of which is an alexandrine, closes the sonnet—as it may be called—in the Shakespearean manner. The final couplet contains the burden, which runs through the whole song, and which, unlike most repetitions of the kind, never becomes wearisome. The number of rhymes in each stanza is usually seven. After these conditions are fulfilled the poet allows himself a considerable license, much more than is permissible in the sonnet, and yet we are reminded of the uniformity which must obtain in the octave of the Petrarchan form of that stanza, combining with the comparative freedom allowed in the sestet. I have no doubt that Spenser adopted the particular stanza of the Epithalamion, not fortuitously, but deliberately, and after a careful consideration of the capacity for fine metrical expression which would be gained by combining the attributes of the sonnet and the ode. The advantages of such a stanza are obvious, but it has its dangers. It gives greater freedom for the play of ideas, but the poet who uses it must have strength enough to resist the temptation to indulge in such license as will send him wandering off into feebleness and vacuity, he must know that his rhymes are not to be scattered about haphazard, but must be put in the one place where they are needed, that here the short line may follow a long one, and produce an admirable effect, that elsewhere it will not, and that the ten-syllable line must be

judiciously and frequently inserted to keep up the strength of the whole measure. Another advantage of such a stanza is that it gives the true metrist an opportunity for trying effects of rhythm more subtle than those which can be evolved under the restrictions of a severely ordered metre. Of all these things, however, the unskilled rhymester knows little, and had better keep himself safe within the confines of a fixed and definite measure. Wordsworth's great ode on the "Intimations of Immortality," which, though superior to the Epithalamion in sentiment, is inferior to it in metre, is yet our best modern standard and example of what may be done with the fluctuating line and the irregular rhyme.

In reading the Epithalamion I find but one line which is doubtful as to its metre. It occurs in the twenty-second stanza—"Without blemish or staine." I do not say it cannot be read metrically, but this can only be done by some contortion of the accents; and I mention it chiefly in order to enable me to say that it is the only line of the kind in the whole 426 of which the poem consists. One or two words and phrases here and there may be objected to. "Joyed," and "wished" are awkward, "doleful dreariment" and "my beloved love," are affected, but these are only slight flaws in a poem which runs with an even flow of excellence from beginning to end. Of exquisite lines I must quote a few.

Pay to her usury of long delight.

How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,  
And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain,  
Like crimson dyed in grain.

. . . . . Modesty

That suffers not one look to glance awry  
Which may let in a little thought unsound.

One complete stanza may now be quoted to show the general scheme of the versification.

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time;  
 The rosy morn long since left Tithone's bed,  
 All ready to her silver coach to climb;  
 And Phœbus 'gins to show his glorious head.  
 Hark! how the cheerful birds do chant their lays  
 And carol of Love's praise.  
 The merry lark her matins sings aloft;  
 The thrush replies; the mavis descant plays;  
 The ouzel shrills; the ruddock warbles soft;  
 So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,  
 To this day's merriment.  
 Ah, my dear love, why do ye sleep thus long,  
 When meeter were that ye should now awake,  
 To await the coming of your joyous mate,  
 And hearken to the birds' love-learned song,  
 The dewy leaves among;  
 For they of joy and pleasure to you sing,  
 That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

The chief characteristics of the Epithalamion, apart from its wonderfully melodious verse, are a sweet and artless simplicity, an exquisite tenderness, a note of love genuine and not assumed for artistic purposes, and at times a nobility of expression—especially in the passages which contain classical allusions—which rises to sublimity.

The Prothalamion was written in 1596. It was Spenser's last completed poem, and we read its lines with an under current of sadness, remembering that the sun of his life was soon to set in clouds of ruin and disaster. He calls it himself "A Spousal Verse." It was written before, and in celebration of the double and contemporaneous marriage of two of his friends, "worthy gentlemen," to "two honourable and virtuous ladies." It is not in my judgment equal to the Epithalamion, though it has received the high encomiums of many competent critics. The verse is not so ingeniously perfect as that of the earlier poem, nor is the sentiment marked by the same sincerity. Evidently he could not

write of the marriage of others with the same spontaneous outflow of feeling as that with which he was able to write of his own.

The ten stanzas of the Prothalamion have each eighteen lines. The rhymes vary from six to eight, and the arrangement of these is more irregular than in the Epithalamion. The poet binds himself to an opening quatrain but not to a couplet following. Instead of this he adopts a line rhyming with the last of the quatrain. Each stanza ends with a couplet which is also the recurrent and delightfully harmonious burden.

Against the bridal day, which is not long :  
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

Two ugly words disfigure the poem—"rutty" and "bricky"—and we wonder how his taste could have admitted them. There is in the first stanza one bad line—"Fit to deck maiden's bowers," but there are many charming passages, of which one may be given—

The violet, pallid blue,  
The little daisy that at evening closes,  
The virgin lily, and the primrose true,  
With store of vermeil roses,  
To deck their bridegrooms' posies  
Against the bridal day, which was not long ;  
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

Turning now to the general subject of Spenser's versification, I may say that I know of none more melodious. Milton has greater strength, but not more melody. Hazlitt barely does justice to Spenser when, though admitting that he is the most harmonious of our poets, he says, he has not "the same ear for music, the same power of approximating the varieties of poetical to those of musical rhythm as Milton." Coleridge said: "Spenser's Epithalamion is truly sublime; and pray mark the swan-like movement of his ex-

quisite Prothalamion. His attention to metre and rhythm is sometimes so extremely minute as to be painful even to my ear, and you know how highly I prize good versification." Wordsworth, speaking to the late Aubrey De Vere, of the Epithalamion, said : " In its long and exquisitely balanced stanzas there was a swan-like movement and a subtle metrical sweetness, the secret of which I could never wholly discover, and the like of which I find nowhere else except in Milton's "Lycidas." Where Wordsworth failed we may hardly hope to succeed, but we may attempt to solve the problem in some measure. To begin with, he must have studied deeply the mechanism of verse in the classical languages as well as in Italian and English. He knew, as Milton did so conspicuously, the wonderful resources of the varying vowel sounds ; he knew also the consonants which would bear propinquity and which would not ; he was a master of all the arts of alliteration, not only of that which is obvious, but of that which, though concealed, is no less effective ; he had learned from Chaucer the practice of eliding syllables ; and, greatest secret of all, he knew how to make quantity coincide with accent. But these elements being granted, we must go further if we would discover his secret. That lay, I believe, in the perfect harmony which existed between his conception and his metrical language. The two things moved together, acting and reacting upon each other. They became indeed identical. Of course he could not have done this if he had not had an ear marvelously delicate and sensitive to all the harmonies of rhythm, and a knowledge of all the resources and capacities of metrical construction added to a vocabulary of vast extent and yet of careful and discriminating choice. Spenser composed, in fact, as a great musician might sit down before an instrument over which he had perfect command and control, and allow the music by the touch of his fingers to flow un-

broken in entire harmony with the thoughts or sensations which were passing through his mind.

Other poets had excellencies which were not his, but none of them has left us such a vast storehouse of beauty—of moral beauty as well as that of outward things, or has done so much to prove that our English tongue may, in the right hands, be made to equal even the Italian in mellifluousness without material loss in native strength and vigour.





## LIFTING TUESDAY.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

Mighty daughters of the plough  
Bent their broad faces towards us and addressed  
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,  
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
The weight of destiny."

—Tennyson.

The jest and earnest working side by side.

—Tennyson.

EARSTERTIDE in Barnton was distinguished by more than one old-world observance. On Good Friday the boys of the village ranging from earliest youth to the whiskered borders of manhood were in the habit of acting the old Peace-egging, or as they would themselves call it, Pace-egging tragi-comedy of St. George to the admiration and sometimes to the dismay of their elders. The costumes of the performers were highly decorative if strictly rudimentary. They consisted chiefly of gauze tunics and gay ribands worn negligently over Sunday clothes, while caps not unlike bridal-wreaths of artificial flowers formed the usual headpieces of the gallant knight and his numerous enemies. Their swords were of that type which is commonly associated with the stage-brigand, short-bladed, basket-hilted, riband-decked and not too pointed. St. George and his adversaries fought in the approved stage

fashion of two cuts down and two cuts up in regular rotation, until each foe was disposed of in summary style. The slain then retired from the ring and sat down on his heels, as only a collier can, until he was restored to life by the magical power of the doctor. This worthy wore a false beard of the Sunday School order, a rather damaged tall hat garnished with little bells round the brim, a frock-coat and a hump carefully dusted with whitening to add to his learned appearance. The performers were sometimes rewarded in kind and sometimes in cash. They had a natural preference for money, from its purchasing power, as opposed to eggs, on which they rightly judged themselves unfitted to sit. They generally made a handsome profit out of their oft repeated performance, which they were prone to spend according to their tastes and to their years.

Another and far more dangerous class of performers came round on the Thursday night before Good Friday. These were known and dreaded as the "Black Pace-eggers." They concealed their faces beneath black masks or a sufficient layer of soot kept in its place by a thin wash of treacle, and were armed with heavy bludgeons. They prowled round in the night seeking admittance into quiet houses: nay they had been known to break down the door where they had met with a refusal. When they made their appearance cottage-doors were barred and double-locked, shutters were put up and firmly fixed, for these night-wanderers were by no means popular. If they succeeded in forcing their way into a house they were seldom expelled until they had extorted a considerable sum of money or had exhausted every kind of available drink therein, save medicine. If these favours were denied them they would literally "make hay" with the furniture and do serious damage. For a long time they enjoyed their

prescriptive rights, until the villagers rose in a body and soundly ducked one party, while they gave the second into the safe keeping of the Police. What old custom they represented it is hard even to conjecture, unless it were a final struggle for mastery upon the part of the powers of darkness before they were crushed for ever by the Crucifixion.

In addition to the foregoing celebrants of Good Friday small boys and girls were wont to visit the farms of the neighbourhood with baskets, wherein they stored the eggs, which they usually received. Doubtless these varied customs go back to the age of Miracle Plays, though the connection of eggs with the Mysteries would seem to date from Saxon times and from the festival of the goddess of spring. A more suitable object to combine with the ancient mysteries than an egg could hardly be found; it is in itself a mystery until it be eaten, when it betrays its age and condition, while no philosopher has satisfactorily solved the grave problem as to whether the egg or the bird came first, since either comes from the other. But the small children aforesaid did not perplex their brains with such abstruse inquiries; it was their object to get the eggs and to eat them in due course, not to explain their origin. They were not often disappointed: the farmers might grumble at the Good Friday tax; but if they failed to "look sweet" sometimes, they at all events "paid up," and so contented their youthful petitioners.

Moreover, on Easter Sunday all the girls below a certain age, and many of those the number of whose years was a carefully guarded secret to all but themselves and the baptismal registers, used to appear in church and at the old chapel dressed in fine white gowns and in bonnets or hats trimmed with white flowers and ribands. They

made a pretty show in the dark, square oak pews of the chapel, though it was painfully obvious that they were too deeply engrossed with their new frocks and with the sit of their head-gear to pay any close attention to the parson. But they did sing at the top of their voices and with much gusto the time-honoured Easter hymn, "Jesus Christ is risen to-day" with its copious shower of "Hallelujahs." The young men, too, had commonly some portion of their attire new on this joyous anniversary, and they sat uncomfortably in their pews like most men are apt to do, who suffer from the disadvantage of new clothes.

But Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday were perhaps the most noted, as they undoubtedly were the most boisterous days of the festive season. They were celebrated by a laughter-provoking custom long since passed away, but once much enjoyed by those who partook of its delights. On the Monday little troops of men of various ages and degrees of respectability were in the habit of walking down the more frequented roads and of lifting every woman whom they met. In return for so pious an observance they always expected what they would have called "lush-money." The women screamed, as they often do on trivial occasions; but it must be remarked that they endured much *lifting* before they paid their dues. Nay, some of them were almost always to be found in the way of the men, from which it may be inferred, that in spite of their hysterical giggles they did not dislike the moving process. At least, if they wished to escape being *lifted*, they might easily have stayed within doors, which they seldom, if ever, did.

On Easter Tuesday the tables were turned, if the proverbial expression may be used in such a connection, and the women *lifted* the men. It is needless to add that this reverse process was greatly enjoyed by the majority

of the men, who had no objection to the rather rough pressure of sturdy feminine arms. The *lifting* itself was no mere half-hearted or formal exaltation; the victims were caught up carelessly and tossed up and down like animated shuttlecocks, until they hardly knew whether their digestive organs were their own. Speedy payment procured a no less speedy release; but such payment was rarely if ever speedy, while its rigorous exaction was accompanied by shouts of mirth or by giggling screams, according to the sex of the *lifted*. Some ingenious tracers of origins assert in all solemnity, that the practice was an old Easter celebration of "the lifting up on to the Cross." It may be so, but it cannot be denied that the observance was in every respect ludicrous, and had long lost its essential meaning.

On the edge of Barnton lived three strapping women, tall, strongly but gracefully built, and of a determined character, whose practice of taking advantage of the privileges of "Lifting Tuesday" was invariable. Woe to the man, who was innocently walking down the road by himself and meditating upon the changeful vicissitudes of human affairs, if when he met these damsels he did not at once compound for his freedom! They spared no-one, old or young, whom they happened to meet, and the more obdurate he proved, the more pressing were their attentions to him. They were rosy-cheeked, well-favoured damsels, sisters alike in birth, affection and in mischief. The "Three Graces" had ample strength, and they knew how to use it in the most persistent and aggravating manner. They lived at a little ivy-covered cottage surrounded by a well-kept garden, with its inevitable stock of ancient damson trees. By trade they were hand-loom weavers, makers of a certain coarse grey and white check cloth, once much used in Barnton and the surrounding neigh-

bourhood. Their names were Polly, Jenny, and Bessy, and their every-day clothing consisted of sun-bonnets made of neat print, bed-gowns of similar but differently coloured material and scrupulously clean, linsey-woolsey petticoats, blue worsted stockings, and mighty shoes with four-holed flaps of leather to give a suitable place for the laces.

One Easter Tuesday, many years ago, they sallied forth "full-summed in all their powers" to begin their accustomed game. They were smiling cheerfully in glad anticipation of a good haul following upon an equally good maul. They chatted gaily in their simple and expressive Doric, which no modern combination of letters can adequately represent in its trenchant vigour and its occasional sweetness. It was a late Easter and an early Spring for that northern climate; the trees, except the oak and the ash, were beginning to burst forth into leaf, and the hedges were shrouded with a gauze-like veil of vivid green. The throstle was singing to his mate busied with her nestlings, as if he had small concern in their upbringing; the goldfinch whispered from the leafless briars, wherein his nest lurked deep-hidden; the bolder chaffinch tuned his merry little carol, and the yellowhammer piped his shrill "a little bit of bread and no cheese," drawing out the last word, as if it expressed his deepest earthly loathing. High over all the lark sailed upwards with fluttering wings, pouring down a stream of nature's most exhilarating melody. Here and there a primrose starred the green grass of the hedgerows, the daisies gazed on sky with wide-opened eyes, the dog violet purpled its dainty scentless petals, and the yellow pilewort lifted its tiny suns above the fresh green of its young leaves. It was a real holiday morning, whereon nature had donned her best kirtle brocaded with fresh spring flowers.

But the three damsels thought little of the fair sights and sweet sounds around them; their blithe hearts were overflowing with happy expectation of much boisterous but innocent fun. They hurried along, when they caught sight of a stout figure moving leisurely down the lane in front of them. "Why, theer's Mester Green o'er yonder, gooin' down th' lone," exclaimed Polly, merrily. "'appen 'e's gooin' towart Beauchamp. Let's gi'e 'm a gradely liftin'."

"Howiver conto forshame?" exclaimed Jenny, the most nervous of the three. "Thou'll niver dreeam o' liftin' 'im; an' thou connot, shos how thou tries."

"Thee howd thy din, Jenny," returned her sister, saucily. "'e's a rare good weight for sure; but ne'er heed; aw'm boun' t' lift 'im for a' that."

"Weel, if we con lift 'm," put in Bessy sagaciously, "we'st be weel able t' lift onybody else; for 'e's summat an' stout, 'e is."

Something in the manner of the approach of the mischievous three forewarned Mr. Green of his impending fate. But he knew the privileges of the day, and though he did not exactly relish the frolic he was determined not to baulk the young women. He was not tall; but he made up for his lack of height by his great breadth and circumference. His dark eyes flashed with a mingled flame of amusement and irritation; but amusement on the whole got the better of irritation and he made ready to undergo his undesired elevation.

"Good mornin', Mester Green," said Polly with a roguish look and in a soothing tone. "Dun yo' 'appen to know what day it is?"

"Ay," he answered shortly, trying to look angry and failing dismally. "You want to lift me, I doubt."

"Ay, we'd be reet fain t' stait wi' yo', Mester Green,"

answered Bessy with a cunning glance, " so as we can try our strength a bit. Yo're noan just exactly a fitherweight, an' if we con lift yo' we'st manitch a' as we meet'n, aw doubt."

"Ay, I'm not so light as I was once," he said with just the suspicion of a smile lurking in his handsome face. "Let me lie down a bit, and then you can lift away to your heart's content."

They were unwise enough to agree to his cunning suggestion, and down he laid himself on the fringe of grass, which lay alongside of the ash-covered causeway. The young women had forgotten that a heavy man in such a position is about as awkward and infinitely heavier than a feather-bed. But they "booned themselves" to their task with a right good will: they tugged, and hauled, and strained themselves, and lifted first one leg and then the other. Their labour was in vain, they could not stir his body. "I doubt, I've cheated you this time," he said, laughing, when he had struggled to his feet: "but I'm not going to balk you of your bit of brass. Here's something that will do for you."

The girls thanked him, and laughed heartily at the trick which had been played upon them. In spite of their thankfulness for the half-crown and their unrestrained amusement, they could not help blushing over their complete failure. Mr. Green's eyes soon perceived their confusion, and he exclaimed, in his cheeriest tone, "Never heed, my lasses; better luck next time. I'm about the heaviest man you'll be likely to meet to-day, I'm thinking. Good morning to you; I'd like to be so as you could lift me."

They wished him "Good morning," and set off blithely in the opposite direction to the one which he had taken. But every now and then, though the joke was against

them, they could not help stopping to laugh at the old bachelor's cunning, which had delivered him from their sturdy arms. They met many a man on their way, and they passed none without giving him a good *lifting* and still more hearty shaking. They might have imagined every male being, who crossed their path, to be a kind of animated medicine-bottle, which they were destined to shake before exacting the price of his freedom. Indeed the result of their operations was to make more than one of their patients much afflicted in temper and language. Having gone nearly half way to Warley, they began to retrace their steps. It was now past noon, and their inward clock reminded them that they had as yet had no dinner. The exercise both of their legs and arms had made them hungry, and they were not young women of that ethereal kind who seem to live on air in public.

They stopped at the old toll-bar, and bought a "two-thry oddments" from its venerable keeper, whom they refrained from *lifting* because of his lame son. When they had eaten enough of highly questionable solids, such as huge triangles of "traycle cake," great chunks of jannock and handfuls of "savoury duck," which they washed down with copious draughts of homely yet invigorating nettle-beer, they made off back towards home. They had done pretty well in their takings, and they were laughing and passing on to one another more or less pointed jokes, so that the time flew along without their feeling the fatigues of the day. They went by the *Ben Jonson* with an altogether illegitimate "h," a public-house whose sign represented a faded portrait of the great dramatist in a snuff-coloured jerkin and in the proud possession of a nose at least as broad as two of his own broad fingers. They could hear one of their victims through the open window of the tap-room eloquently expatiating upon

the degradation with which he had been treated and on the absurdity of the custom. They could afford to smile at his woeful complainings; for little more than an hour ago they had taken from him a five-shilling piece, which had happened to be the smallest and, at the same time, the largest coin which he had about him.

They soon reached the Dog and Dutch Oven; when, before turning down the lane which led them home, they caught sight of the familiar figure of a travelling Scotchman staggering along under the burden of his pack. "Why, isno' yon Owd Jammie Butterscotch," they exclaimed with one voice? "It'll be a rare gam' t' lift 'im gradely."

"Thou'll get nowt out on 'im but fou' words an' fou'er deeds," said Bessie to her eldest sister.

"Thee niver 'eed what we gett'n," retorted Polly. "We'st get a gradely marlock out on 'im, if we nobbut rive 'is owd duds fro' off his back."

"Weel shap' it as yo' pleas'n," said Bessie. "Aw'm noan gooin' t' be fur 'angin' back at this time o' th' day. But yo' mit as weel try fur to skin a tum-cat's yowlin' as t' get a hawpenny fro' Owd Jammie Butterscotch."

They drew cautiously near to their destined victim, who knew the custom only too well, and had no small fear for himself, his beloved baubees, and for his pack. He was a slim, keen-looking old man, as "cant as a fiddler," and as sharp as a razor, as all who had tried to drive a bargain with him had found to their cost. He stood five feet six inches in his socks, and weighed about eight stone in his clothes. His heart leaped to his mouth with one convulsive bound when the three young women stopped in front of him with their very arms twitching with eagerness to *lift* him. He was on the point of abusing them with his powerful vocabulary; but upon second thoughts he

deemed that fair speech would serve his turn best. "Weel, yong leddies," he began politely, "good aſthernoon to ye. Is it onything in my way ye're wanting to buy the noo?"

"It's thee as we want'n an' noan o' thy stuff, Jammie," they said in one breath with a roguish twinkle in their eyes. "Yo' know weel enoof as it's Liftn' Tuesday, an' we're noan gooin' t' let thee off bout payin' weel; we're boun' t' lift thee t' th' sky or thereabouts."

"Nay, leddies, ye winna think o' doing ony such thing," he replied with trembling limbs and a pathetic warble in his voice. "I'm a varra auld man, as puir as a wee bit moosie, an' I canna endure ye to lift me. I've had the rheumatic for ower sax years, an' I canna bide touching."

"Yo' mit just as weel howd yo'r din, Jammie," replied Polly, in a tone of relentless determination. "Yo'n noan gett'n th' rheumatic i' yo'r ribs as we known on, an' we'st noan touch yo'r legs. Yo'll have to ston' liftin', or yo'll have to pay weel to do bout."

Seeing that fair words did not move the resolution of his tormentors, the luckless Scotchman began to denounce them in no measured tones. "Ye're a' three shameless huzzies," he cried in his shrill piping voice. "But I'm a man, and I winna be lifted. Lay a finger on me at your proper peril. I'll inform the policeman against ye. I winna be touched; I'll strike ye, the moment ye begin."

At this valorous threat the three strapping girls laughed outright; they made a ring round him to prevent him from escaping, and he stood at bay in the midst like a timid bird in the moulting season. Each of them was taller than he, and each could have laid him across her stalwart knee and treated him to that homely punishment familiar to childhood. "Nay, nay, Jammie, thou'll noan get rip on us so yezzily o' that'ns," they exclaimed. "Pay up,

an' 'appen we'st let thee off chep, seein' as thou'rt nobbut a thravellin' Scotchmon. Gi'e us sixpence each, an' we'll let thee gooa an' be fain to be shut on thee."

"Saxpence each," cried Jammie in the extremity of amazement at the magnitude of their demand. "I'll no be giving ye a single baubee. Hands aff, my bonny woman," he continued in the same agonised tone, when Polly began to fasten upon him to *lift* him. "Hands aff, I tell ye, or it'll be muckle the waur for ye."

His threat was utterly thrown away upon the young women, who jerked his pack from his shoulder and began to shake his expostulating person upward and downward with a rhythmic motion of a violent and distressful kind, so that his thin clothes well nigh came in pieces in their hands. The more he expostulated in staccato tones, the more they shook him. At length they felt his worn braces gradually parting company with the buttons of his trousers one by one, but Jennie's only remark was,

"Pay up, Jammie owd mon, pay up and look sweet, if thou con. Eh, lasses, aw con feel as 'e's gett'n a purse as is noan empty i' his jacket. He'd best pay up an' ha'e done wi'h, or we'st rive his scanty duds fro' off his skinny back."

"Look sweet, saysto," exclaimed Bessy with a fine touch of irony in her tones. "'e favvers a cat as 'as supped buttermilk too mich t' look sweet. Jammie, thou'd a deeol better pay up, an' look as thou allus does. Theyur," she added, as she heard a slight, sharp sound. "Theyur, theer's another button gone, thou'st gett'n no moor nor two left."

Hereupon the three girls laughed so heartily that they were compelled to loosen their hold of the old man, who snatched up his pack, and throwing it over his shoulder held on to it with one hand, while he clung to his slipping

trousers with the other. He made off as fast as he could run, while the young women gave chase, moving in the cowlike fashion adopted by their sex in running. Terror lent wings to Jammie's heels, and laughter lent lead to the feet of his pursuers. He never stopped till he came to Peter's cottage. The garden gate was open, and the door was unbolted; so in he rushed, as if wild Indians were behind him. The moment that he got inside, he bolted the door top and bottom to keep out the "three Graces." He tried to move a dresser to the door, but his strength failed him, and he had to be content with the simpler protection of bolts.

He found the cottage empty; Peter himself was in the back-garden all unconsciously delving a potato-patch and dreaming of an abundant crop in the late summer. His wife, Betsy, was down in the village doing some household errand. There was no living being inside, save hidden mice, an occasional cockroach and the cat, which the moment it saw Jammie's abrupt entrance rushed underneath the dresser with an unduly enlarged tail, and remained there in partial concealment swearing snugly to itself, until the object of its fears had retreated. A few moments later the three damsels reached the door, and began to thunder on the outside so vigorously that they made it shake and creak in all its timbers. But Jammie was in a safe place for the present; he refused to quit his temporary retirement, and he held strong and stern parley with his besiegers in highly picturesque and abusive language.

"Coom out wi' tho, thou great ninnyhommer, wilto," cried the girls in one breath. "We'st stop 'ere reet up t' midneet, afoor we lett'n thee off bout payin'."

The word *pay* acted upon the already sufficiently excited nerves of the poor Scotchman like a mustard-plaster on a

raw wound. "Pay ye?" he screamed from somewhere about the region of the key-hole. "Is it, pay ye, ye mean? I'll see ye a' in h—— farst."

"Eh, hairken to 'im," was the answer from outside. "Jammie, dunnot yo' know 'at yo' shouldno' say sich things. But yo'd best oppen th' dur. Theer's Peter coomin' as quick as 'e con, an' 'e winnot bide shuttin' out o' 'is own house fur th' likes o' thee."

Sure enough Peter was coming slowly down the little pebbled path which led from the back garden to the front of his cottage. Though the clamour had been raging furiously for some time, it had only just dawned upon him that it was his door which was being battered. He took a natural interest in the cause of the "clanjamphry," as any reasonable man would, but he little dreamed that he was shut out of his own house by a travelling Scotchman. As he stumped leisurely round the corner he caught sight of the three girls, whom he knew well. Remembering what day it was, he felt sure that they had been playing some mischievous prank, and he asked them in his most peevish tones, "Weel yo' wenches, what dun yo' want peylin' at my dur o' that'ns? Aw'm noan boun' t' stond it, aw con tell yo'. Yo'd do a deeol better t' gooa whoam as shairp as yo' con an' get to yo'r work."

The girls looked crestfallen for a moment, but their spirits revived when they caught the sound of a shuffling inside the cottage. Jammie had heard the owner's wise remark, and thinking it boded him some riddance of his tormentors he shouted, "Do ye hear that, ye bletherin' bitches? Be aff wi' ye, and dinna pairsecute an honest man. Wad ye keep the auld man oot o' his hoose? Be aff wi' ye, I'se telling ye; be aff wi' ye, and gang hame this varra meenute."

"Wheer should we gooa to, thinksto," the girls screamed

in answer. "We noan gooa bout thee, thou owd skin-flint. We like thee so weel, we connot part wi' thee bout a bit o' thy brass. We're noan partitler, a bit o' silver or gowd 'll do as weel. Coom, Jammie, thou'st made a pratty penny out on us i' thy time; gi'e us eighteenpence an' we'll let thee gooa."

"Eighteenpence? Did onybody hear the like?" was the answer shouted back in the same angry tone. "Ye'll get naught frae me, I'se telling ye. Ye may e'en gang t' h—— for aught I care. I'm no about to quit my Ceety of Refuge to fa' into the maiciless hands o' three shameless tawpies like yersels."

By this time Peter himself had reached the door of his cottage; his temper was by no means improved when he caught sight of several large footprints on his neatly kept garden-beds. He stood with his spade in front of him, and eyed the three damsels in turn with an expression which grew sourer and sourer as he gazed. "Whar are yo' doin' at 'im?" he asked in a commanding voice, for he had taught them to read and write in the Sunday School. "Whooa is it as yo'n gett'n in yon?"

"It's nobbut owd Jammie Butterscotch," was the reply. "Yo' known weel enoof as it's Liftin' Tuesday, Peter, an' we'n bin liftin' 'im a bit, but e' winnot gi'e us nowt. We'n offert t' let him off fur eighteenpence, an' that's chep enoof fur a mon o' 'is mak'."

"Aw'm noan gooin' t' hev my cot torned into a bear-garden, noather fur yo' nor fur 'im," said Peter with implacable severity. "Connot yo' gooa a-liftin', if yo' mun lift, somewhereer else nor upo' th' outside o' my dur?"

"Aw dar' say we could, Peter, but we're noan boun' t' try this time," retorted Polly, just a little nettled by the old man's failure to perceive the exquisite point of the jest. We'n lifted Owd Jammie Butterscotch till we'n

brasted a' the buttons off 'is breeches nobbut two, an' 'is rotten owd galluses 'll 'airdly howd 'em up. We're noan boun' t' shift noather fur thee nor fur 'im, if he winnot pay summat or be lifted till he does."

Peter saw that it was no use to waste his words upon his old scholars, and he was not without a touch of fear lest they might take it into their heads to *lift* him if he proved too severe. He peeped in through the window and saw poor Jammie's plight. The luckless Scotchman's clothes were creased and torn in more places than one; his coat seemed as if it had been made for someone else; his trousers were all but slowly slipping down his lean shanks, and a portion of his braces was hanging down behind like an impromptu tail. Do what he would, a smile flitted across Peter's ordinarily grave features, and he turned to the young women with the words,

"By th' mass, wenches, yo'n gan 'im a gradely dooment, 'is clooas 'll niver stick on till 'e gets t' Warley. Bur 'e's gett'n the best on us 'at afther a's said an' done, 'e's upo' th' inside, an' we're nobbut upo' th' wrung side o' th' dur. Aw'll try t' ger 'im out fur yo'; bur aw doubt aw'st noan manitch shoshowtis."

The girls smile merrily one to another, and Bessy said, "That's reet, Peter; aw know'd thou'd be ticklet by th' marlock, when thou'd seen Owd Butterscotch. Bur 'ow con we ger 'im out? That's what aw want fur t' know."

"Thou'st see fur thysel', my wench," said Peter, and moving to the door he began to parley with the self-imprisoned captive, who expostulated, and besought, and threatened, but refused to budge, until his fair enemies were gone. Peter gradually lost his temper, which was not very much to lose after all; and the two disputants, the one on the inside of the door and the other on the outside, proceeded from intreaty to argument, from argument

to heated discussion, from heated discussion to angry threats, and from angry threats to doubts of each other's eternal welfare. The girls greatly enjoyed the dispute, and they goaded Peter almost to madness.

"Thou'rt a nice un, Peter," they kept on saying in scornful and aggravating tones, "t' be kept out on thy own house by nobbut a bit o' a travelling Scotchman, an' 'im sich a little un. Beeat th' dur down. Aw wouldno hev it tined i' my face, if aw were thee, fur a nasty little clemmed rotten like yon."

In the midst of the altercation Peter's wife, Betsy, came back from her errand and she gazed with great surprise first on one of the group then on the other. "Whatever are yo' makkin' a' this din outside th' dur fur? Connot yo' gooa inside, if yo' mun fratch?"

"It's a' along o' thee, thou great foumart," shouted Peter angrily and glad to get someone on whom he could lay the blame without danger of reprisals of a more violent nature than words. "Wheer hasto' bin a' this while an' left th' dur oppen fur ony wastrel t' crope in an' shut us out on our own house?"

"Thee howd thy nise, Peter," retorted Betsy, "if thou connot talk sense, an' it's noan so oft as thou con. Didn'to send me to buy thee hawf a ounce o' bacco, an' if aw'd made th' dur however couldto ha'e gett'n inside thyself?"

There was no answering these plain questions to his own satisfaction, so Peter, like an experienced general, tried a flank movement. "Bur aw niver towd thee t' be moor nor an hour an' a hawf away, did aw, thou gossipin' buzzart? If thou'd ha'e coom back i' daycent time we shouldno' ha'e been shutten out o' our house by yon jolteryead inside."

"Thou'rt nobbut a foumart thyself, Peter," replied Betsy scornfully, "fur a' at thou thinks thyself so wise.

Whatever wereto doin' t' let a mon like yon into th' inside fur? What's 'e feared on, 'at 'e's tined th' dur i' our faces?"

"'E's afeard o' these 'ere wenches, aw doubt," said Peter. "They'n bin wastin' their time i' goin' about an' liftin' folk. Bur it's a' thy fault; if thou'd nobbut bin awhoam, we should noan ha'e bin bothert wi' a' this nise an' nonsense."

"It's allus my fault, Peter," said Betsy, "by thy tellin: if thou gets fuddlet, it's me as 'as made thee. Aw'd be reet fain t' see these wenches lift thee i' thy turn, t' tayche thee a quiet tongue."

Peter would probably have said much in reply to this retort; but he was interrupted by the arrival of his children from various parts of the village. They reached the garden gate one at a time, and when they understood the dispute they burst out laughing with the utmost heartiness. But laughter would not unbolt the door, and Jammie would listen neither to persuasion nor threats. In vain they parleyed through the keyhole and through the window; he was determined to hold the fort against all comers. The altercation raged loud and high for more than an hour, until the "three Graces" grew tired, and began to move off homewards rejoicing greatly at the success of their day's pleasure. Anyone who met them with their rosy cheeks and smiling faces, or heard their merry laughter, could not have helped admiring them, as they walked along.

Jammie saw them go; but he thought that it was merely a ruse to ensnare him once more. He hated the *lifting* like poison; but he hated parting with his beloved baubees more. For another half hour he was deaf to all intreaties to open the door; and indeed he had some reason to dread the vengeance of the family. But at

length he knew he could hold out no longer with any benefit to himself. Cautiously he withdrew first the top bolt, and then the bottom bolt, and quietly opened the door.

Peter was the first to enter. "Yo're a nice soart o' a mon t' keep a whole family out on their own house," he was beginning angrily; but seeing the pitiful plight of the unfortunate Scotchman, his anger gave way to unrestrained mirth, in which he was heartily joined by the rest of his family. "Weel," he continued, "thou'rt a bonny hobjec' fur sure, aw mun say that fur thee."

A bonny object poor Jammie was. His neat pack was all in disorder, with a bulge on one side like a swollen cheek, and with a corresponding dimple on the other. His long thin face was scratched in several places; the ribbons of his cap were torn off, and his lank hair was rough as the cat's tail. His coat, which was as thin as his face, had one great right-angled rent in the middle of the back. The patches, which decked his trousers in various places, seemed parting from the parent garment, and every stitch was strained to its utmost tether without entirely giving way. His trousers themselves hung by two buttons and half a pair of braces, while he was covered with dust from top to toe. He stammered out his apologies as best he could; but the whole of the family literally shouted with laughter at his wretched plight. From apologies he would have changed to recriminations if he dared. But he was one to six, and all that he ventured to say was uttered in a tone of wounded vanity, which made them laugh the louder. "If ye had suffered what I have frae the hands o' yon three shameless huzzies, ye wadna be caickling the noo."

"'Appen we shouldno', Jammie, 'appen we shouldno', " said Betsy pacifically. "Bur if thou'd nobbut hev paid

up thou'd hev saved boooth us an' thysel' a deool o' bother. Let's ha'e a look at thee. Nay, aw connot torn thee out a that'ns bout doin' a bit o' mendin' fur thee, fur a' as thou did tine th' dur i' our faces."

Jammie absolutely refused to doff his clothes while the mending was being done, so they laid him on his stomach upon a venerable squab, whose permanent hardness was but slightly softened by a thin, blue and white covered cushion. Betsy got her needle and thread: her intention was kind, but her eyesight was not good and she sewed his shirt and his trousers together with such pertinacity that he had considerable trouble in disengaging them that night, when he had reached home. Now and then she made a desperate, if praiseworthy, effort to sew some of the skin into the same patch, but on such occasions Jammie sung out lustily and wriggled like an eel. At length he was "redd up," and washed, and sent on his way lamenting; but neither his watch, nor his temper, nor his digestion pursued the wonted "tenour of their way" for several weeks afterwards.

"Aw doubt we'st a' on us mind Liftin' Tuesday fur mony a year to come an' Owd Jammie Butterscotch moast on a'," was Peter's sage comment when he was quietly smoking his pipe in the chimney-nook before going to bed that night.





## SOME CHESHIRE VILLAGE CHARACTERISTICS.

BY W. V. BURGESS.

THE old-time characteristics of English village life are gradually changing—must inevitably change—the influences of railway, telegraph, newspapers, and cheap travel must perforce greatly modify their pristine qualities of quaintness and unsophistication. There are, however, some rural quarters, which as yet, seem but little affected by what is termed the "onward march of progress," and a considerable number of these may still be found comparatively near at hand, in our sister palatine—Cheshire.

To one of these sequestered villages, in the heart of the cheese-county, I am in the habit of stealing away for a more or less brief space to enjoy Nature and Human Nature, first hand, as it were, and to shake off for a time the smoke and conventionalities of city life. During these frequent visits I have made the acquaintance of almost all the salient characteristics of the place, scenic and personal, and have found among these country folk and their surroundings a sort of second home. Even as I write this brief sketch I feel the subduing effects of its leisurely vernacular, its thatched roofs, and homely garden patches, its ancient towered church, and many another feature common to many another village and yet peculiar only to this.

Wherever in the meantime my rambles may have led me, or whatever time may have intervened, there always comes over me a sense of contentment when I turn into the quarter of a mile of winding road, which in the main, constitutes the village of Mereham. But that feeling merges into one of full satisfaction when later I drop down the sloping cobbled lane and enter the manor farm wherein I am usually domiciled.

The house itself is a picturesque structure built upon that style loosely called Elizabethan, with pointed gables surmounted with stone balls as if in anticipation of those Cromwellian Roundheads, who afterwards damaged so much of its beauty. The lay of the interior is unusually rambling, and the sleeping chambers wake you up in the dead of night with creepy sounds, that is, until you get used to them; afterwards you rather like them, as a kind of company.

Many a long summer afternoon, when the heat has been too intense for any sort of activity, I have sat in the quiet cool parlour reading Baxter's "*Saints Rest*" or some other such book to be found on the hanging shelves, till I have dozed, half hearing and less than half understanding, the farm noises at the back of the house. The measured jerk of the pump, the clanging of milk pails, the clattering of horses' hoofs, an occasional yelp of a collie or the sudden screech of a guinea fowl. Then these sounds have gradually grown more distant and unreal, the low ceiling and wainscotted walls less and less tangible, and at length I have entered another world—the world of dreams.

On awakening there has perhaps been less sunshine and clatter without, but from within there has reached my nostrils the smell of newly-baked cakes and pungent tea, and my ears have caught the deep tones of my farmer-host's

voice, drawling out : " Aye, it's bin uncommon hot, an' th' barrel wur dry welly as soon as th' men."

Thomas Broadside, or "Owd Tummas," as he is familiarly called, is one of those old-fashioned farmers who do not believe in the "new-fangled" implements for either lessening or lightening human labour. "For fifty year," I have often heard him say, "summer and winter I've worked on this very farm twice as long as I've slept, shearing sheep, hoeing turmits, forking taters, lending a hand in t' shippions, and t' dairy. Seein' t' carts off wi' grain or root crops, an' tramping a dozen miles afore breakfast for t' buy a pig or a heifer. I'm seventy-five come Micklemas, an' I can beat many a young 'un yet at driving a straight furrow or pruning a quickset."

Indeed, "Owd Tummas" has a wide reputation for industry and shrewdness. He is a regular chapel-goer on Sundays, where his stentorian ejaculations are no doubt intended to make up for any weekday delinquencies. In his estimation Sunday is the Lord's Day, and every other day is Tummas's. There are many little stories anent his business acumen, one of them illustrates his marked proclivity when at market, for appropriating other dealers' potato sacks. On one occasion, being busily engaged in filling his cart with sacks belonging to a neighbouring farmer, the owner remonstrated with him thus : " Here, here, Tummas, thoose are my sacks, conno' you see they've got my initials on, W.T.?" " Nay, nay," said Tummas, they're my sacks, and them's my initials—W. for Tummas and T. for Broadside."

Old Tummas's father, Tummas, who died some years ago, at the ripe old age of eighty-nine, was like the present Tummas, "a great mon at th' chapel," and as equally facile in pressing other people's belongings into his service. I well remember when the old man was bed-ridden, and

nearing his end, that the parson came to administer the consolations of his office. The old man was bitterly complaining of the Providence which had stricken him down, when the minister reminded him that the Lord had been very good to him in granting him long life, good health and fair prosperity. "O, aye," replied the old man, "when you put it in that way I must say th' Lord's always been a perfect gentleman to me."

Mereham is no exception to the ordinary run of such places, in that it possesses its village church, its village pump, its village ale-house, and alas! also, its village idiot. In this case the latter is one of those vacuous expressioned imbeciles, inoffensive enough, but cunning to a degree. He calls himself "Norley," but whether this is his real name or not no one seems to either know or care. He is hopelessly weak-minded, though I have known him to exhibit a wonderful cuteness on certain occasions. Once he was caught in the rectory gardens helping himself to fruit, and being brought before the rector, he was severely reprimanded by that worthy, who concluded his chiding by exhorting Norley to abstain from such acts in future, as it was the devil who was tempting him. "The Devil tempting me!" exclaimed Norley, "Nay, but th' owd gentleman's too busy wi' you great folk to bother wi' such as me." Another time he was discovered fishing in one of the park ponds, a most heinous offence. Seeing the keeper approaching and having no chance of escape, he whipped out his line, tore off the bait and tied his bait-pot, a tea-cup, in its place. "What are you doing there?" demanded the keeper. "Fishing for washing mugs" replied Norley. "Oh," said the keeper, "and what may you be baiting with?" "Ha'penny tea-cups," answered Norley, and drawing out his line of course displayed one. "Poor old idiot," muttered the keeper, and passed on, leaving

Norley to gather up his piscatorial plunder, which he had hastily hidden in the grass, and decamp in the opposite direction. The last time I saw Norley he was standing where the road forks, and shouting "Bravo, little 'uns, bravo, little 'uns," to the front wheels of a landau which was passing along the highway, the front wheels being smaller than the back ones, and yet ahead of them, seemed very praiseworthy to Norley.

Mereham, like every other village, has its pains and its pleasures, its lights and its shadows, one of these latter cast its gloom over the heart of the place a few months ago. I had only arrived at the farm that evening, and finding the house deserted I turned into the village to reconnoitre, not in any gracious mood to be sure, for I had an internal void which made itself uncomfortably evident, so that I could sympathise with Sydney Smith, who, when told to take a walk on an empty stomach, asked, Whose?

Suddenly, I heard, in the direction of the church, the sound of singing, and arriving at the notary's house, I was told that his daughter, a girl scarcely twenty years of age, was dying of consumption and had asked that the church choir might sing beneath her window, "Rock of Ages," that greatest favourite of all Christian hymns. It was that strange mysterious twilight time between day and night, the summer sky was filling with a vague gloom, through which the radiance of one star burnt with a faint yet lustrous light. The dying girl propped up with pillows, could be distinctly seen in the dimly lighted room. The singers held up bravely till they arrived at the lines :

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When my eyes shall close in death.

Then they utterly broke down, and their sobs were audible. The poor, wasted form sank among the pillows, and the doctor who was standing near, was heard to say, "Hush!

her earthly pilgrimage is finished. Ah me, it was a scene pathetic enough to make the strongest weep ; my physical needs were routed by it, and there was a point of red in the east and a rustle of the dawn-wind in the woods before I returned to the farm for food and rest.

Some days afterwards I met the doctor who, in reply to my questions, said : " No, though I have seen death many times it never loses its pathos, its awfulness, and at every dead man's side I feel that something has escaped me which is beyond my analysis, and believe me, dear friend, the longer we live the more we get to trust those truths which are indefensible by mere logic."

Of course Mereham's old church has its numerous traditions and legends. Of one of these the present fathers of the village will tell you how that their fathers told them that the third bell, of the peal of three, fell one Sunday and was shattered to pieces. The parish just then, being too poor to provide another bronze bell, a leather one was substituted, with the result that for some years the people were summoned to their devotions each Sabbath to the chime of " Ding dong, puff ! Ding dong, puff ! "

The rector, whose flower-sprinkled, thyme-scented garden, adjoins the churchyard, is paradoxically a mild-mannered Athanasianist, dispensing the churches' curses and more merciful amenities as occasion requires. At times I have seen him rook-shooting about the coppice, he is too timid for fox hunting, he has a way of holding his gun up for some time after he has discharged it, and once being questioned as to why he still kept his gun levelled after firing replied, " How do I know whether it is all out or not yet ? "

On the lower ground below the parsonage, stand three dilapidated cottages, there were formerly four, but one was burnt down some years ago. These seem to be literally held together by an overgrowth of honeysuckle, clematis

and tropiolum. If there is any slum in Mereham those three cottages constitute it, there are evil rumours attached to them of poaching and other illegal proceedings of a like nature. Dick Carden, Levi Such, and Leggie Jack, occupy these tenements, and I must confess I always found them decent enough men, and if they did occasionally net a few rabbits and hares, well—there is a saying hereabouts that "A poacher is a keeper turned outside-in, and a keeper is a poacher turned inside-out." In the burnt-down cottage, however, there used to live a really desperate character, albeit somewhat of a hero, as the story of his final exploit will show. The Old Guard at Waterloo sooner than let their standard fall into the enemy's hands burnt it, and drank the ashes in brandy. So Joe Grice rather than incriminate his companions set fire to his cottage, containing poaching and other apparatus, immolated himself in the flames, and so baffled the police who had encordoned the house.

From the point of view of intelligence Mereham is neither better nor worse than most of its neighbours, though it is said that a generation ago, when a certain major tried to organise a military squad in the village, the recruits did not know the left leg from the right, and the major had to tie a hay-band and a straw-band round those respective limbs to distinguish them. So that when drilling them, instead of saying, "Left, right, left, right," he said, "Hay-band, straw-band, hay-band, straw-band." When the Bill for compulsory education was passed, old Tummas was heard to observe that he would not be compelled to send his children to a school where they taught them to spell "Taters wi' a P."

The village inn—there is only one—is called the "Red Bull," and the keeper of it is named "Teethy," a singularly inappropriate name, for he has not a tooth in his head.

This lack is fully compensated for by Teethy's nose, and a right noble organ it is, eminently calculated by prominence and extent to display every phase of alcoho<sup>lic</sup> effect. His nose and chin so nearly approximate that he is generally known as "Old Nut Crackers." He possesses a certain sort of wit and gallantry held in high esteem by his customers. He was once met on the highway by a horseman, who enquired " Which way does this road go my man?" " I don't know," replied Teethy, " it is always here when I come this way." The local 'bus, usually referred to as the village band-box, was one time full, and a lady wishing to enter, old Teethy, who was one of the passengers, immediately proffered his seat, but the lady demurred, saying, " I will not deprive you of your seat, sir, indeed I will not deprive you," when Teethy remarked, with alacrity, " It's no depravity, mam, no depravity." One morning I was seated on a bench watching the farmyard operations, when Teethy dropped in and joined me. Hospitable Mrs. Broadside brought out to him a custard with a raised well-baked crust, upon which Teethy's gums made no impression, so, carefully spooning out the inside, he handed the crust back, saying, " Here's your basin back, missis, and thank you." He once had a notion of altering the name of the inn from the " Red Bull" to the " General Napier," but the village artist, who is also the village postman and undertaker, declared that the sign was not large enough to hold the full length figure of Napier, at which Teethy instructed him to paint as much of the body as the sign would hold and let the remainder hang down!

To the many other anecdotal characteristics, which crowd into my mind as I write, I must for the present cry, " Hold!" and of gypsy-lore, ghosts, witchcraft, charms, the evil eye, and all sorts of superstitions incident to my village, I must forbear even the mere mention. Its inner life of stead-

fastness, heroism, and self-sacrifice I must also leave unrelated, and confine my few concluding lines to a description of Mereham's scenic setting. The distinctive characteristics of position or building are neither many nor marked. As the name implies it is a hamlet situated in contiguity to a number of those meres for which Cheshire is famous. It is almost belted south and west by the forest of De-la-mere, whose fir-lined ridges stand across the sunset horizon, rising here and there into higher mounds of foliage and culminating in high Billinge itself. The locality is intersected by grand high roads, whose charms are only exceeded by those of the many grassy glades which everywhere hereabouts strike into the heart of the royal forest.

Thus is Mereham engirt, that village into whose bosom I like to creep for rest and quiet, and amid whose clustered homesteads I first saw the light, in whose grey towered church I was joined to one who like a benison abode with me for a space, then passed, and in whose "holy field" perchance I may rest when the good God shall bid me hence.





## CHRISTOPHER SMART.

1722-1771.\*

BY JOHN H. SWANN.

EARLY years of bright promise, a Fellow of Pembroke College, a temporary inmate of Bedlam, a bookseller's hack, and an ending in a debtor's prison—such is a brief outline of the life of Christopher Smart, the author of many verses and one poem.

Smart was born at Shipbourne, in Kent, on the 11th of April, 1722. In his georgic, the "Hop Garden," after enumerating some of the "lions" of his native place, he adds—

Yes, little Shipbourne, boast that these are thine—  
And if—but oh!—and if 'tis no disgrace,  
The birth of him who now records thy praise.

He had ample opportunities in the matter of education. After some preliminaries at Maidstone, he was sent to Durham School, the choice being no doubt accounted for by the presence of paternal relatives in the district. A former Prebendary of Durham, one Peter Smart, was an ancestor.

\* All subsequent biographical sketches are based on that attached to the 1791 edition of Smart's Poems. Chalmers and Anderson, in their collections of English poets, have included short biographies. Mr. Edmund Gosse's article in his "Gossip in a Library," embodies information derived from an examination of documents at Pembroke College. Mr. T. Seccombe's article in the "Dictionary of National Biography" summarises all available information.

Christopher's father had been steward of estates in Kent belonging to the younger son of Lord Barnard, of Raby Castle, Durham ; that circumstance, combined with an early facility in verse-making, will explain an interest shown in the young scholar by Lord Barnard and the Duchess of Cleveland. The latter "probably weakened his self-reliance," as one writer puts it, by allowing him £40 per annum until her death in 1742.

In October, 1739, Smart was admitted to Pembroke Hall (now College), Cambridge. He graduated B.A. in 1743, and in 1745 was made a Fellow of his college. He held various college posts until 1747, when he graduated M.A. Between that year and 1755, Mr. Gosse's researches in college documents show references to certain absences, otherwise temporary retirements to the madhouse or Bedlam. The poet Gray, who was a college contemporary of Smart's, makes various more or less unfriendly references to him in his letters, and in October, 1751, jots down "Smart sets out for Bedlam."

His college career was prophetic of his life. He combined study with conviviality in such a degree as to secure a fellowship and to become seriously involved in dissipation and debt. He formed too strong an attachment to what in the "Hop Garden" he calls the "buxom beer," and Dr. Johnson told Dr. Burney, at a later period, that "he used for exercise to walk to the alehouse, but he was carried back again."

After graduating B.A. he translated Pope's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" into Latin, afterwards doing the like service for the "Essay on Criticism" and Milton's "L'Allegro." He also produced a comedy which he and other gay spirits acted in the college hall. It was entitled "A Trip to Cambridge ; or, the Grateful Fair," and only some slight relics remain.

In 1753 the college authorities were surprised to hear that Mr. Smart was a married man, and the appreciation of his talents by his college was shown when he was not deprived of his fellowship. An order was passed that "Mr. Smart have leave to keep his name in the college books without any expense, so long as he continues to write for the premium left by Mr. Seaton." He had gained the Seatonian prize for a poem on an attribute of the Deity each year from the foundation in 1750, and his college was proud of the distinction. He missed the prize in 1754, gained it again in the following year, and afterwards, says Mr. Gosse, "appears no more in Pembroke records."

In stature, Smart was not of the average height. One of his odes is entitled "The Author Apologises to a Lady for his being a Little Man," and begins thus :

Yes, contumelious fair, you scorn  
The amorous dwarf that courts you to his arms.

In the course of the ode he informs the lady that

Laurels on bulky bards as rarely grow  
As on the sturdy oak, the virtuous mistletoe.

He was naturally shy, but the shyness was only a veil that, once removed, revealed an amiable and sociable nature. In spite of his failings, his friends and contemporaries (save Gray) seem to have had a regard for him such as could only have been inspired by a pleasing character. With children he was playful, and that is no sign of a moody disposition. In the latter days, however, we are told, he became "a mere wreck of his former self."

His poetry declares him to have been an admirer of the fair sex, though, perhaps, more judicious in his admiration than some poets have been. Even at the age of thirteen he displayed his susceptibility in an ode "To Ethelinda : On her doing my verses the honour of wearing them in her bosom."

Happy verses! that were prest  
In fair Ethelinda's breast!  
Happy Muse, that didst embrace  
The sweet, the heavenly-fragrant place!  
Tell me, is the omen true,  
Shall the bard arrive there, too?

"The union of religious enthusiasm with moral weakness is not a rare phenomenon," observes a writer on Smart, in *Temple Bar* (1897), and the remark is the key to the seeming paradox of Smart's nature. That nature was emotional, and emotionalism plays a considerable part in both religious enthusiasm and moral weakness. Smart was undoubtedly of a religious nature, and the insanity that afterwards at times afflicted him was a species of religious mania.

Chalmers quaintly remarks that Smart's father "probably [communicated to his son] that turn for pious reflection which appears in many of his works, and was not interrupted with impunity by the irregularities of his life," and in Dr. Burney's "Memoirs" it is recorded that "when he was master of his faculties, his piety though rather fanatical than rational, was truly sincere, and survived all his calamities, whether mental or mundane." His mania lay in the direction of praying at inconvenient times and in unusual places.

Dr. Johnson, to whom Smart had been introduced by Dr. Burney, visited him when confined in Bethlehem Hospital (or Bedlam), and afterwards remarked, "I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him: and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as with any one else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it."

The Seatonian prize poems dealt with the Eternity, the Immensity, the Omnipotence, the Power, and the Goodness

of the Supreme Being. In them we may find faint glimmerings of the poetic light that illuminates the "Song to David," but probably the best that can be said of them is that they are better than some university prize poems, and not so dull as to be unreadable. At the commencement of the "Immensity" ode, Smart styles himself "the poet of my God"—"a bold and reprehensible freedom," observes Chalmers.

In 1750 John Newbery published "The Horatian Canons of Friendship. Being the third satire of the First Book of Horace, imitated. By Ebenezer Pentweazle." This was an excursion by Smart into the realms of satire, but his next venture was a much more serious one, when, in 1753, he belaboured—and bespattered, one may say—"Sir" John Hill in "The Hilliad." This gentleman, being apparently something of a physician, more of a quack, and much more of a book-maker, managed to irritate into satire other wits, including David Garrick, who thus stung him:—

For physic and farces his rival there scarce is  
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is."

Hill's title was derived from the King of Sweden, to whom he had presented his "System of Botany" in 17 folio volumes.

Smart suspected Hill of being the author of an adverse criticism of his "Poems" published in 1752, and was more certain of his connection with some abuse published in a periodical entitled *The Impertinent*.

Some correspondence prefixed to the satire shows it to have been circulated in MS. among college friends\* before Smart could make up his mind to print it.

"I would rather be commended to posterity by the ele-

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\* Chalmers states that it was written before the appearance of the review of the "Poems."

gant and amiable muses than by the satyric sister, politely called by an eminent writer 'the least engaging of the Nine,' " he says. The satire was not finished, but what was written was published. It is not a savoury production. There is the usual machinery of personified human qualities, bad ones in this instance, who assemble and dower the unfortunate hero with their repulsive gifts. A "tawny Sybil" thus charges Hillario:—

Thou grand dictator of each public show  
 Wit, moralist, quack, harlequin and beau,  
 Survey man's vice, self-prais'd and self-preferr'd,  
 And be th' Inspector\* of th' infected herd;  
 By any means aspire to any ends  
 Baseness exalts, and cowardice defends,  
 The chequer'd world's before thez—go—farewell,  
 Beware of Irishmen†—and learn to spell.

Smart's "Poems on Several Occasions" was published in 1752 by Newbery, in 4to, "on fine paper," and "adorned with several copperplates" at the price, to subscribers, of half-a-guinea. The list of subscribers contains no less than 700 names, and has the distinction of including those of Voltaire, Richardson, Savage, Gray, Collins, and Garrick. The most ambitious of the poems is "The Hop-Garden : a Georgic." Smart, having been born among hop-gardens, had evidently profited thereby, and displays in the poem more than a superficial knowledge of hop-growing and hop-picking. He makes free use of Virgil, and his Muse having a feminine fancy for side tracks, the main theme is diversified with not a few excursions, historical and classical.

Soon as bright Chanticleer explodes the night  
 With flutt'ring wings and hymns the new-born day,

\* A publication of Hill's was so named.

† Hill had been publicly thrashed by an Irishman.

is, to say the least, more amusing than the poet probably suspected.

The poem flows placidly enough, and with the odes, ballads, fables, psalms and satires, in which Smart followed the prevailing literary fashions of his time, does not attempt to "spurn the earth" any more than does "bright charicleer" in his most soaring moments. The trail of the 18th century is over them all.

We'll with the well-disguised hook  
Cheat the tenants of the brook

is a proposal to go a-fishing.

And her breast, the throne of love,  
Can hardly, hardly, hardly move  
To send th' ambrosial sigh.

So we are told in his own "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," wherein, also, *Urania* is recommended to be "angelically gay"! The lady whom Smart had married without taking the college authorities into his confidence, was Miss Anna Maria Carnan, the daughter of a Reading printer, and the step-daughter of Newbery, the publisher.

Though o'er her white forehead the gilt tresses flow,  
Like the rays of the sun on a hillock of snow;  
Such, painters of old drew the queen of the fair,  
'Tis the taste of the ancients, 'tis classical hair.  
And though witlings may scoff, and though railery mocks,  
Yet I'll sing to my lass with the golden locks.

So sang the poet of his wife in "The Lass with the Golden Locks." The marriage was not altogether an advantageous one from the lady's point of view,—at all events so it would seem to us. Smart was too generous for a married man with a very precarious income. Mrs. Smart knew what it was to have friends brought home to dinner when there was nothing in the house to place before them! Indeed, the family were often in straitened circumstances, and for some

years Smart was unable to support his wife and two children (both girls). They were helped by Mr. Newbery and other friends, and Garrick generously gave Smart a benefit at Drury Lane in 1759.

Mrs. Smart must have been a woman of ability, for, after her husband's death, she and her children went to Reading, and through the kindness of Mr. Newbery, became possessed of the *Reading Mercury* and a bookselling business. On her death the paper became the property of her children, one of whom was the wife of Thomas Cowslade, the grandfather of the present proprietor. The other daughter married a Chevalier Le Noir, and was known as a novelist in her day.

Smart's marriage naturally brought him into closer contact with Newbery, who discovered that he had a talent for advertising, and was not slow in making use of it. From 1750 to 1753 Smart conducted a threepenny journal, published—though not directly—by Newbery, and its title is, no doubt, a fair specimen of the poet-puffer's ability—"The Midwife ; or, The Old Woman's Magazine, containing all the wit and all the humour and all the learning and all the judgment that has ever been or ever will be inserted in all the other magazines, or the Magazine of Magazines, or the Grand Magazine of Magazines, or any other book whatsoever, so that those who buy this book will need no other."

Short pieces in prose and verse made up this Grub-street production, and, as Chalmers discreetly remarks, they are "generally in a style of humour which in our more polished days would be reckoned somewhat coarse."

Smart's pæan of thankfulness upon recovering from a serious illness, entitled "Hymn to the Supreme Being," has a testimonial to the merits of Dr. James's fever powder prefixed to it!

One stanza of this hymn has a spark of unwonted fire—

Ye strengthen'd feet, forth to His altar move :  
Quicken, ye new-strung nerves, th' enraptured lyre ;  
Ye heav'n-directed eyes, o'erflow with love ;  
Glow, glow, my soul, with pure seraphic fire ;  
Deeds, thoughts, and words, no more His mandates break,  
But to His endless glory work, conceive and speak.

The story of Smart's life in London is not cheerful reading. Grub-street overshadows it. Yet he found a good friend in large-hearted Dr. Johnson, and was known to other men whose names live in the literary history of the period. There is a legend that Smart leased himself for 99 years to write only for a print known as *The Universal Visiter*, the pay to be one-third of the profits. In this connection Dr. Johnson stated, "I wrote for some months in *The Universal Visiter* for poor Smart, while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in *The Universal Visiter* no longer. Generations of schoolboys, struggling with despair and the Latin language, have made more or less surreptitious use of Smart's prose translation of Horace, published in 1756, and at various times reprinted. Convenience rather than merit is perhaps the secret of its success. He published a metrical translation in addition to the prose, in 1767, for he was afraid the prose version would damage his reputation. Curiously enough, up to recent times, it was that prose translation alone that kept his name from oblivion!"

Another piece of classical task-work in the shape of a verse translation of the "Fables" of Phædrus appeared in 1765.

The combined effects of Grub-street, the fellowship of the foaming tankard, and mania resulted in another visit

to Bedlam in 1763, and it was during his detention there that the inspiration which gave to the world the "Song to David" visited him. There is a tradition that the poem was indented on either the wainscot or the panels of the door of his cell with a key, or written with charcoal on the wall. This may be true of a small portion, but 86 stanzas of six lines each cannot have been so recorded. Probably he finished the poem on his return to society: it appeared in a thin quarto in 1763.

Whatever theory we may be disposed to entertain as to the reason why Smart, half-mad as he was, should have been enabled to produce such a remarkable poem, we must acknowledge ourselves in the presence of a strange literary phenomenon, though we may not be able to see in it "the only great accomplished poem of the 18th century," as did Dante Rossetti, nor with Mr. Gosse, to call it "a portent of beauty and originality."

In his "Parleyings with certain People of importance in their day," Browning begins a "parley" with Smart by relating a dream in which Smart's poetry is figured as a large house, through which, room after room, the dreamer passes, finding only evidences of mediocre taste:

The master of the mansion was no fool  
Assuredly, no genius just as sure!

Suddenly, pushing open a door and upraising a hanging, he enters a wonderful chapel, wherein all that art can do has been accomplished—

From floor to roof one evidence  
Of how far earth may rival heaven.

After gazing upon that beautiful sight, he goes on "big with anticipation" to other rooms, only to find the previous monotony repeated. Browning, we are told, was "never tired of declaiming" the "Song to David," and with fine daring he apostrophises Smart as—

— yourself who sang  
 A song where flute-breath silvers trumpet-clang,  
 And stations you for once on either hand  
 With Milton and with Keats, empowered to claim  
 Affinity on just one point.

Smart's contemporaries regarded the poem as a product too redolent of Bedlam for inclusion in the collected edition of his poems published in 1791. Certainly there are portions that require some thinking over to get at their meaning, and the poet's wandering tendencies are at times evident.

But throughout there is a warm glow of poetic feeling ;— the strong flow of a tide of inspiration that swept the poet into a realm whose revealed glories moved him to the depths of his soul. The very language seems changed ; it vibrates with an unwonted emotion ; it is beautiful with the colour of an imagination touched by a darting tongue of that fire known in its fulness only to the greatest of earth's singers. David is the theme :

Great, valiant, pious, good and clean,  
 Sublime, contemplative, serene  
 Strong, constant, pleasant, wise !

A separate stanza is devoted to each of those characteristics, followed by other stanzas on the themes of David's songs. Then the poem rises into a grand song of adoration, wherein the universe and all things therein are shown as engaged in perpetual adoration of the Creator in the acts of their every-day existence.

The wealthy crops of whit'ning rice  
 'Mongst thyme woods and groves of spice  
 For ADORATION grow :  
 And, marshall'd in the fenced land,  
 The peaches and pomegranates stand,  
 Where wild carnations blow.

For adoration in the skies,  
 The Lord's philosopher espies  
     The Dog, the Ram, the Rose :  
 The planet's ring, Orion's sword  
 Nor is his greatness less ador'd  
     In the vile worm that glows.

The poem ends gloriously indeed :—

Glorious the sun in mid career ;  
 Glorious th' assembled fires appear ;  
     Glorious the comet's train :  
 Glorious the trumpet and alarm ;  
 Glorious th' Almighty's stretch'd-out arm ;  
     Glorious th' entranced main :  
  
 Glorious the northern lights astream ;  
 Glorious the song, when God's the theme :  
     Glorious the thunder's roar :  
 Glorious hosannah from the den :  
 Glorious the catholic amen ;  
     Glorious the martyr's gore :  
  
 Glorious—more glorious is the crown  
 Of Him that brought salvation down,  
     By meekness called thy Son\* ;  
 Thou that stupendous truth believed,  
 And now the matchless deed's achieved,  
     Determined, Dared, and Done.

Christian doctrine is curiously intermingled with Hebrew theology both in the "Song" and in the translation of the "Psalms," which Smart published in 1765. The inspiration that quickens the former work was not present in the latter, and Messrs. Tate and Brady were not outshone.

A letter, written by Dr. Hawkesworth, gives us a glimpse of the poet after his release, "with very decent people, in a house most delightfully situated, with a terrace that overlooks St. James's Park," but his former habits again prevailed, and in 1770 accumulated debts resulted in confine-

\* Son of David.

ment in the King's Bench Prison. His brother-in-law obtained the "rules"† for him, and from the Burney "Memoirs" we learn that in addition to the prison allowance he had a small pittance provided by his friends. In his last letter to Dr. Burney, he characteristically pleaded for a fellow-sufferer, "whom I myself have already assisted according to my willing poverty." There, after a short illness, he died on May 21st, 1771. The contemporary issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* thus notes his passing:— "Mr. Christopher Smart, A.M., a gentleman eminently distinguished for his poetical abilities."

His ashes repose under the shadow of that brooding vastness, the dome of St. Paul's. May they rest in peace!



†A district around and outside the prison, where prisoners who could procure the favour were allowed to reside.



## TO A CHILD ON ITS MOTHER'S KNEE.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

Chestnut curls, and wilder'd eyes  
Bluer than still summer skies,  
Cheeks as ripe as peaches red,  
Ruby lips with smiles bespread ;  
Pearls in coral setting bright,  
Breath as spring's first breezes light ;  
Snowy brow, calm coverlid,  
'Neath which wisdom's stores lie hid ;  
Dainty dimples one, two, three,  
Puckered up to welcome me ;  
Little, supple, rounded form,  
Life-blood throbbing fast and warm,  
Tiny arms with dimples press'd,  
Where the tiny elbows nest ;  
Little feet that shyly peep,  
Where the creamy frillings sleep ;  
Little hands that love to clasp  
Little feet that mock their grasp ;  
Casquet filled with jewels rare,  
Mother sweet, what hast thou there ?

“ ‘Tis a treasure passing far  
Richest case, where jewels are ;  
See the sapphires open’d wide  
Thoughtful wonder deep inside ;  
Silken veil as dark as jet  
On the pearly eyelids set ;  
Corals red outshining those,  
Where the tossing ocean flows,  
Chestnut shent with golden light,  
Rosy shells half out of sight.  
‘Tis an angel from above,  
Tender messenger of love ;  
Listen to the crooning cries—  
Spirit-songs from Paradise !  
See the folded smiling lips,  
Deathless love’s apocalypse,  
Weary frame outstretched to rest,  
Comfortful upon my breast.  
“ Slumber sweet with joyous beams,  
Heavenly radiance glad thy dreams :  
Sleep as fresh as morning dews  
Ruddy health o’er thee transfuse.  
Lead my spirit worn to stray  
With thee in unclouded day,  
That earth’s sorrows melt awhile  
In thy loving baby-smile ! ”



